THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 19 March, 1937 Number 3

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Unity or War
R.P.D.

Unity and the People's Front
PROFESSOR LASKI, HARRY ADAMS and G. D. H. COLE

War Loans, Rearmament and Labour Policy
A. F. PAPWORTH

Hitler and Europe
ROBERT DELL

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The Labour Monthly

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

After Our Conference—Rearmament and the World Situation—Rising Flames—Wolves and Sheep—National Government's Rôle in Spain—From the Anglo-Italian Agreement to Malaga—National Government and Hitler—Nazi Germany's Hour of Decision—Anglo-American Finance and Germany—The "Banker's" Protest—Dominant British Policy—Towards an Anglo-German Agreement?—£400,000,000 and £1,500,000,000—Fighting Rearmament—Unity or War

UNDOUBTEDLY the response to the Conference held last month under the auspices of this journal at the Battersea Town Hall was a sign of the times. Since the beginning of these informal LABOUR MONTHLY Conferences six years ago, in 1931, at the onset of the world economic crisis, when the sense of urgency of impending events and of the necessity of a new broad movement towards unity throughout the working-class organisations led the Editorial Board to try the experiment of calling such Conferences as a forum to assist the coming together of varied forces, the growing response and representative character of these Conferences has been a testimony to the growing demand for unity and a positive policy in the face of the crisis. That over four hundred delegates elected by their organisations should have come together in this sixth conference of the series, and, despite the extremely broad range of organisations and outlooks represented, have found common ground in the immediate issues before us, revealed that the movement towards unity has entered into a broad stream. It now remains for readers and supporters of the LABOUR MONTHLY to play their part in assisting the practical realisation of these aims by supporting and carrying forward the development of the Unity Campaign throughout the Labour Movement, at the same time as helping to prepare the way for the eventual realisation of the People's Front. For the benefit of readers who were not able to be present at the Conference we are printing a special enlarged number this month to include a full report of the

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Conference, and especially the important speeches of Harold Laski, Harry Adams, and G. D. H. Cole.*

BUT while the movement for unity is undoubtedly making progress, it must be confessed that it is still far behind the urgency of the situation. Recent events have underlined this urgency. The fall of Malaga, yet another great European city to fascist barbarism, directly consequent on the Anglo-Italian Agreement and the unchecked despatch of 20,000 Italian troops to Spain, and the terrible massacres of men, women and children that have followed, reveal in ever sharper form what is going forward, if a stand is not made, and the heavy responsibility that falls on this country. Hitler's speech, with its repudiation of any peace settlement for Europe and unconcealed proclamation of the war aims of the fascist bloc, has been followed by the close secret conversations of Ribbentrop and the National Government, the preparations for a new Anglo-German Agreement alongside the Anglo-Italian Agreement, for new credits to Germany, and for the visit of Goering to London. The trial of the anti-Soviet Trotskyists has shown the preparations for interventionist war by Fascism. Finally, even for those who may seek to ignore the clear signals of events abroad, the announcement of the projected £400 million War Loan, to total with the redoubled armaments expenditure a minimum of £1,500 million for armaments in the next five years, has created a shock of awareness of where the policy of the National Government is leading.

THE flames of the furnace are rising higher all around us ; and, as the flames rise higher, the real rôle of the British National Government—in the guise of pouring oil on troubled waters, in reality pouring oil on the flames—stands out ever sharper and clearer, like that of the old British Government before 1914. *In the chain of events leading to a new world war, every link in the chain leads back to the National Government.* Tendencies still exist in left circles to treat the policy of the National Government as vacillating, weak and confused. There is little enough vacillation or weakness in a rearmament programme of £1,500 million (indeed, the very delay of the programme means that

*A word to our readers. The organisation of this Conference, and the printing of the present enlarged number, has inevitably cost money, although we have still our existing debts to work off. We are banking on the support of our readers in incurring this expense, and hope that all those who feel there is political value in the work will give special donations this month.

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Britain, having had the shrewdness to wait, now comes in to outstrip every other power in the last lap and arrive with the most modernised up-to-date equipment, whereas a great part of German air equipment from the first years of Hitler is already proving out-of-date). But, in fact the apparent contradictions of British policy only derive from the twofold aim, at once to secure the dominance of the reactionary forces over the democratic forces in Europe, thereby in fact preventing any democratic peace front, and at the same time to turn aside the consequently inevitable war offensive of Fascism from the sphere of immediate British imperialist interests to other directions. From this follows the simultaneous policy of so-called "neutrality," actually collusion with Fascism, alongside intensive isolationist rearmament. This is the combination that leads most directly to war, and makes the National Government, with its decisive power in the balance, the real war-criminal behind the Hitlers, Mussolinis and Francos.

IN a recent article entitled "Is Collective Security Still Possible?" in the *New Outlook*, Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., raises the question, in relation to the present British foreign policy:

> Is it really so impossible to bring home to this practical nation that collective resistance to bullies, however risky, is less risky than eternally truckling to them, allowing them to break the sticks one by one rather than to try the bundle? . . . . Did the response to the Peace Ballot (including the military sanctions clause) or the protest over the Hoare-Laval proposals suggest that we have turned into a nation of sheep, only anxious to huddle into the furthest corner of the fold in the hope that the wolf will sate himself on the nearer and smaller lambs?

Certainly, no one would suggest that the wolves of British Imperialism have turned into sheep (sheep with a £1,500 million rearmament plan); but for that very reason it is necessary to look a little closer at their policy if they appear to behave so. When the wolf puts on sheep's clothing, it is time for the sheep to look out. When the Baldwins, Chamberlains, Rothermeres and Beaverbrooks, unite to preach to the British public to behave like sheep, to turn the other cheek, to look the other way when the fascists make their aggression, to keep very quiet in their corner in the hope that the wicked fascist wolf will devour the others first, then it is reasonable to draw the conclusion that their real policy is not quite so innocent and naïve as they would like us to believe. Certainly, the policy of the National Government to Hitler and Franco and Mussolini

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might appear to the casual observer to be modelled on the well-known advice of Mr. Dooley: "You may dislike a man, and even hate him, but if he wants to fight, you have just got to oblige him." But this very "weakness" to Hitler and Franco and Mussolini covers an extremely conscious ruling-class policy, the counterpart of which is the rearmament plan; and it is against this entire policy, including the rearmament plan, that the united movement needs to be organised, to smash the National Government, if we are to prevent war.

NOWHERE is this real policy of the National Government clearer than in its relation to the Spanish struggle. Had its professions of devotion to the cause of "non-intervention" been genuine, it would have been the first to protest at the flagrant violations by the Fascist Powers, instead of continuously covering such violation, suppressing the facts of intervention, of which it had full information from its agents, and professing ignorance, treating the dispatch of Government troops by Germany and Italy as "volunteers," and even pretending to believe, in the face of the facts, that the number of "volunteers" on either side was "about equal" (Lord Cranborne in the House of Commons on February 8). Is it not obvious to all to-day that the whole policy of "non-intervention" was invented and engineered by the National Government, and forced on a reluctant France,* in order to screen the blockade of the Spanish Democratic Government, while leaving free play to Fascism's war on the Spanish people? When even this policy failed to break the resistance of the Spanish people, then in the new intensified phase since the opening of the present year the hand of the National Government has become even more open. For it was the Anglo-Italian Agreement of January 2 which in fact coincided with the open dispatch of Italian troops to Italy, and freed the way for their further dispatch to the number of forty thousand by mid-February; the Rome conversations of Goering and Mussolini were the direct sequel of the Anglo-Italian Agreement; as Mussolini declared on January 17, "the Mediterranean Agreement with England strengthens the Berlin-Rome axis"; and the Rome conversations prepared the intensified offensive of the Fascist Powers in Spain, leading to the fall of Malaga.

*On the question of the British pressure to enforce "non-intervention" on France against Blum's will, Robert Dell (whose article on "Hitler and Europe" we are very glad to print this month) writes to correct a slip of the pen in the quotation cited from him in the January Notes (page 8); it was Delbos, not Blum, whom the British Ambassador in Paris visited to inform that if Germany attacked France because of France supplying war materials to Spain, Britain would not stand by France.

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STILL more flagrant in the most recent stage has been the collusion of the National Government with Fascist Italy and Germany to pass over without protest their dispatch of whole armies to Spain and holding up of the international agreement to ban volunteers (in practice to ban the only genuine volunteers, the democratic volunteers) until these armies were well established on Spanish soil—i.e., locking the stable doors with a great flourish (and a broken lock) after the horses were well away. As the *Times* Diplomatic Correspondent complacently reports on February 17:

> It is widely assumed that the foreign Governments which support General Franco believe that they will have supplied him, by the time that the ban enters into force, with sufficient aid to ensure the prosecution of the campaign to a successful conclusion. The inflow, especially of Italians, has been extremely rapid in the last eight weeks, and it is not impossible that their total number has risen within that period from a figure below 10,000 to one within measurable distance of 50,000.

50,000 is an understatement; subsequent information shows that for Italian troops alone 80,000 would be closer to accuracy. The fact is "unfortunate," remarks the *Times* editorial the same day; but then proceeds, with blissful equanimity over the handing over of a leading European country to foreign invasion without any stirring of protest or pretence of concern for all the professions of League Covenants and collective peace, to find the agreement a "welcome success" and "something to be thankful for."

EVEN more serious in their final significance are the new moves of the National Government in relation to Hitler. Hitler's speech of January 30 closed the door on any peace settlement for Europe, and red-scored the directions of Nazi war aims. By holding out a promise not to make war on France, Belgium or Holland, he sufficiently indicated his war intentions elsewhere. When he enumerated the "realities" which required to be taken account of in the new Europe, going through the newer States one by one, his omission of Czecho-Slovakia and the Baltic States was equivalent to a programme. His references to the Soviet Union and celebration of the German-Japanese Pact against "Bolshevism" sounded the war drums even more openly than in previous speeches. He rejected with contempt the conception of a general peace settlement for Europe, and proclaimed the fascist doctrine of the "two blocs," glorying in the growing strength of the fascist bloc, which he

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claimed to consist of Germany, Poland, Austria, Italy, Hungary, Jugo-slavia, Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal, " Spain " and Japan. All these points were underlined by Goebbels in his speech at Hamburg a few days later, when he violently threatened Czecho-Slovakia, denounced the Peace Pacts with the Soviet Union as a " menace," denounced France, Spain and Czecho-Slovakia as a prey to " Bolshevism," and proclaimed the duty of Germany to " haul out one or the other of these half-bolshevised or wholly bolshevised European States " (i.e., to repeat the Franco method of interventionist war in one State after another of Europe). These speeches of open incitement to war coincided with private reports that Nazi mobilisation plans were set to strike a decisive aggressive blow in Europe this summer.

BEHIND all this intensified war drive of Nazi Germany lies the problem of the inner situation of the Nazi régime. The four years of rearmament proclaimed at the outset of Hitler's coming to power are completed. The pace of expenditure has risen, according to the figures in last month's *Banker*, from £250 million in the first year to £1,000 million in the last year. What is to follow ? If the gigantic war machine thus created cannot be rapidly used, its value begins to sink in relation to those Powers which have come later into the intensive rearmament drive. The pace of rearmament cannot be long continued at the present level ; already, despite an intricate network of devices and expedients the balance of foreign reserves begins to sink, and the demand grows desperate for raw materials and colonies. To reduce the level of armament expenditure means not only to endanger the superiority attained, but to dislocate the economic machine built up on this basis, throw millions into unemployment, and come face to face with the gather-ing social discontent ; while, even if this crisis could be surmounted, the consequence would mean to turn the gigantic productive machine to flood an already choked world market with goods for export. As these dilemmas stand out more and more sharply, the drive to war in the immediate future as the only way forward becomes intensified among the chiefs of the Nazi régime, despite the hesitations of the more cautious among the military elements.

BUT the prospect of either new Nazi aggression or of inner economic and social crisis of the Nazi régime fills with alarm the dominant imperialist Powers, especially Britain and the United States, the

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leaders of world capitalism. Utilising this alarm, Germany proceeds to blackmail the imperialist Powers for new concessions, political, territorial and economic, for colonies and for new credits. So the movement develops within Anglo-American finance to grant new credits to Germany in order to "buy Germany off" and stave off collapse of the Nazi régime. Runciman proceeds to the United States to meet the leaders of American finance-capital, and is reported to have proposed a £100 million Anglo-American loan to Germany. Walter Lippman writes on January 21 with reference to Runciman's visit:

> It is plain to every one that if Great Britain is to make peace with Germany she must offer Germany a greatly "improved economic prospect." (New York *Herald-Tribune*).

One of the leading private bulletins of American finance-capital, the Whaley-Eaton Supplement to American Letter No. 959 of January 16, is even more explicit:

> The basic European situation is well understood in Washington. Important private American industrialists have been consistently reporting that Germany is in an economic corner, and that the inadequacy of the food supply is getting progressively worse. They say that there is no choice for Germany—she must fight—unless given economic relief. Moreover, that relief must be prompt.

AGAINST this line other sections of British finance-capital, which see that the granting of new credits to Germany will only assist and accelerate the outbreak of war, are conducting an active fight, as illustrated in the February issue of the *Banker*, devoted to the question of Nazi Germany. Starting from the fact that

> from a small but rather influential circle in the City of London there flows a constant stream of propaganda in favour of credits to Germany,

the *Banker* inveighs against this policy in terms whose violence reveals the intensity of the inner conflict:

> German political leaders are gambling with the livelihoods, and are prepared to gamble with the lives, of their people. . . . .
>
> What should England do when confronted by German blackmail? The answer is crystal clear. Any financial or territorial concessions made to the present German régime would serve to perpetuate the gangster tyranny which has forced Europe to become an armed or rapidly arming camp. . . . . We should make no concessions to a country dominated by men who worship force and have shown no hesitation in using murder as an instrument of domestic and foreign policy.

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> The notion that English money would stem the tide of Communism from flowing into Germany is inherently ridiculous. . . . . From the standpoint of the investor Germany is a bottomless pit.

The sections of British finance-capital, however, here voiced by the *Banker*, represent a minority opposition line, and not the dominant line of Montagu Norman and the National Government.

FOR the dominant line of the National Government, faced with this situation, is to seek to reach a close understanding with Germany, to bolster up the Nazi régime, and to endeavour to ensure that its expansion shall not be in the sphere of British imperialist interests. This line, already marked for the whole past period in the repeated declarations of Baldwin and Eden on the limitation of British commitments to Western Europe, has now been increasingly emphasised in recent editorials of the *Times*, notably that of January 28, " Across the Frontiers," which was warmly welcomed by the German press. The *Times* called for the close alliance of Britain, France and Germany in a new " Concert of Europe," the annulment of the Franco-Soviet Pact and of the Czecho-slovak-Soviet Pact as " incompatible with a free political settlement," and the " restraint of the Comintern." The close similarity of line to Hitler's speech two days later was a striking coincidence.

IMMEDIATELY after Hitler's speech these moves towards a new Anglo-German Agreement, to form the counterpart of the Anglo-Italian Agreement, were carried further forward. The *Times* found Hitler's speech " calming and conciliatory," and proclaimed it a " starting point for the closer business of negotiation " ; the time was considered favourable for secret negotiations ; " a truce to public exchanges for a time would be no bad thing." A couple of days later Ribbentrop arrived in London with propositions from Hitler. The British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Eric Phipps, who was said to have issued inconveniently truthful reports on Nazi military preparations and other questions, was shifted ; according to Pertinax, it was Ribbentrop who had demanded his removal. Eden was sent on holiday ; the secret conversations of Ribbentrop and Halifax began. The project for Goering, the main war organiser, to visit London in the summer under cover of the Coronation was announced. Ribbentrop was reported to have brought a programme of colonial demands, which were in fact blackmail to secure British

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co-operation for Germany's free hand in Central and Eastern Europe. On the question of Germany's free hand in Eastern Europe the *Observer* explained with the characteristic lucidity of a journal now well trained in the Hitlerite technique of " explanations " :

> We are not asked to give Germany " a free hand in the East." We are asked not to join in tying Germany's hands in the East; not to bind ourselves against her in that quarter, and to block her there and everywhere.

The distinction will be appreciated by the peoples of the threatened States of Eastern Europe.

The £400 million War Loan and £1,500 million rearmament programme is the inevitable counterpart of this policy. It is precisely because the National Government has supported and is supporting Fascism in Europe, has facilitated and assisted German rearmament, has protected the German-Italian intervention in Spain, has refused to stand by collective peace with the Franco-Soviet Pact, that it has now to arm overwhelmingly in order to make sure that the consequent extending fascist aggression shall not turn in the direction of vital British imperialist interests, but shall be deflected to other quarters, to the States in Central and Eastern Europe which Britain is prepared to sacrifice. German rearmament would never have reached the present point without British support, diplomatic and financial, especially in the early stages. In fact that support is still being carried on to-day by the maintenance of the Standstill Agreement, covering over £40 million, when Germany could have more than repaid it by its last year's exports surplus, visible and invisible, of over £100 million, and instead is permitted by the City to use this to finance purchases for rearmament and even to lend out war loans to client States in Europe, as in the recent German arms loan of 2,500 million drachmas or £4.5 million to the Metaxas dictatorship in Greece. To turn now and make German rearmament the excuse for British rearmament is a two-faced jugglery that should deceive no one.

THE Arms Loan and the Rearmament Programme are the expression of the entire policy of the National Government, a policy supporting the forces of reaction and war throughout Europe and inevitably leading to war. For this reason they can only be fought

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on this basis, on the basis of fighting the entire policy of the National Government, for the defeat of the National Government. They can never be fought and defeated on the basis of criticism of their "unsound economics" or of complaints of the supposed "undisclosed policies" behind them. The policy of the National Government is only too clear, and has been for all the four years since Hitler. They can never be fought and defeated on the basis of uniting with the National Government in a Coronation orgy of "national unity" and war-preparation. This path leads to war. They can only be fought and defeated on the basis of rallying all forces against the National Government for a positive peace policy. But this requires a united movement.

AGAINST the Arms Programme of the National Government, the only practical policy is the policy of the Unity Campaign, to unite all forces for the defeat of the National Government and for the realisation of a positive peace policy of collective resistance to fascist aggression on the basis of a Pact between Britain, France and the Soviet Union and all States in which the working class has political freedom. *If it was not already clear, then the Arms Programme of the National Government should make it clear that the question of the Unity Campaign is not only a question of the immediate victory or defeat of the Labour Movement, but is also a question of Peace or War.* Those elements of the Labour leadership who are opposing Unity are choosing war. They are preferring to accept the continuance of the National Government and its policy, which leads to war, rather than unite all forces to defeat it. The expulsion of the Socialist League has shown that the fatal policy of disruption still continues and is even extended, although a minority of nine was now revealed on the Labour Party Executive, and the offensive has not yet been carried further. The experience of the St. Pancras by-election, no less than of the London County Council elections has shown the existence of a deadly tendency, exactly paralleling German Social Democracy, to prefer defeat rather than unity. Against this tendency the mobilisation represented by the Unity Campaign needs to summon all healthy forces of the Labour Movement. The Arms Programme of the National Government has now placed the issue very sharply before the people of this country. The alternatives are between unity to defeat the National Government or the certainty of war.

R. P. D.

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UNITY AND THE PEOPLE'S FRONT[1]

I.

Unity and the Labour Party

By HAROLD J. LASKI

MY presence on this platform with Mr. Dutt symbolises, I think, the possibility of a real unity within the Labour Movement. If there is anyone by whom my writings have been more bitterly criticised in the last ten or twelve years I do not know him. But both Mr. Dutt and I realise that, whatever our differences, the situation to-day is too grave for us to allow them to disturb an urgently necessary collaboration against the common foe. We may criticise one another's views ; a healthy freedom of discussion is the life-blood of the Labour Movement. But, transcending our disagreements, we have the sense that the most urgent fact in the face of the growing menace of Fascism is the need to stand shoulder to shoulder. That is why I am here to-day. I am prepared to stand on the same platform with Palme Dutt or any other member of a working-class party who is ready to fight against the twin threats of war and fascism. I do not see how a convinced socialist can do otherwise.

I am anxious this morning to turn your attention to three essential things. I want, first, to enquire why there is no unity in the Labour Movement, and into the consequences if it remains unattained. I want, secondly, to say a word upon the Popular Front ; and, thirdly, perhaps because I am a teacher, and every teacher is half a moralist, I want, if I may, to address certain words of warning to my comrades of the Communist Party. It may seem audacious for me to do this in a meeting under these auspices. I do so for a very simple reason. I know full well the clarity of diagnosis the Communists have. I admire their courage and their devotion. But they are often bad psychologists ; and I think it may be of some utility if I suggest some considerations they must have in mind in seeking a common basis of action with the Labour Party.

Why is there no unity in the Labour Movement ? First, I think, because it lacks a coherent philosophy. It has not really sought to analyse the nature of capitalist democracy. It has not properly inquired into the dynamics of power in a capitalist state. It has been content to assume that, sooner or later, the simple process of the swing of the pendulum will bring us to office. It has not asked what, within the limits

[1]These three speeches of Professor Laski, Harry Adams and G. D. H. Cole were made at the Battersea Conference of the LABOUR MONTHLY, a full report of which follows on page 193.

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of capitalist democracy, can be done with office when we get it. It has assumed the permanence of constitutionalism. It has assumed, that is to say, that the habits of British capitalists are different from those of the Continent. The latter may overthrow democracy, as in Germany, Austria, Italy, rather than accept defeat. Here, our leaders have assumed a Labour victory at the polls will be followed by the constitutional abdication of the owners of the instruments of production.

The Labour Movement, in short, has never confronted, in any real or thoroughgoing way, the implications of the class nature of our society. It has been blind, in my judgment, to the dangers a Labour Movement aiming at socialism necessarily confronts in a capitalist democracy in a period of crisis.

May I put this in a simple way ? In that queer marriage we call capitalist democracy, where crisis emerges, either the democracy must transform the capitalism, or the capitalism will suppress the democracy. There is no other way. The long success of our system is the outcome of this country's unchallenged economic supremacy. That is rapidly disappearing. When we held it, we could satisfy democratically the hunger of the masses for increasing material welfare. As it disappears, the ability to satisfy that hunger and maintain capitalism as a going concern becomes increasingly difficult. Since the inherent logic of capitalism is the necessity of profit, it is bound to suppress those institutions which interfere with profit, if it can. What are they ? The democratic system, surely, with its free trade unions, its free co-operative movement, its free socialist parties. They are, in the period of capitalist contraction, the obstacles to profitability. That is why they have gone in all Fascist countries. That is why they will go here, also, unless we organise in time to prevent their destruction.

The Labour Party, I suggest, has concentrated its mind upon a formal political democracy as though this exists as an absolute in a vacuum unrelated to space and time. But the machinery of the state is driven for purposes set by the class-relations of a society. If these are capitalist, then capitalism can only accept democracy provided that the latter does not move to its appointed end. It does not matter that Mr. Baldwin, or Sir John Simon or Mr. Attlee, may protest their belief in democracy. The lesson of all the Fascist countries is that the logic of capitalism will transcend their protest. As soon as democracy in any capitalist country becomes a vital threat to the maintenance of capitalist privilege, democracy goes by the board unless men are united to challenge its overthrow. And, with its annihilation there go all the values we are accustomed to call civilisation.

On this basis, I lay down one principle that I hope this conference will accept without question. It is the simple principle that unless the

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philosophy of the British Labour Movement is built upon a full acceptance of Marxism, there can be no real hope for its survival. Without that Marxist basis, there can be no accurate diagnosis of our situation ; without that accurate diagnosis, there can be no successful strategy of action. No doubt it is ugly to think of the state-power as essentially the executive instrument of capitalist discipline. No doubt, also, it is uncomfortable to think that class-war is the most real phenomenon in our daily lives. Without this understanding, foreign experience makes it clear that we are heading for disaster. For the lesson of Marxism, borne out by the grim history of the post-war years, is that only a united working class can be the spear-head of socialist defence and socialist initiative. Remain divided, and you court the fate of Italy and Germany. Unite, and at least you may hope to fight with success for your freedom. That is why, I suggest, the enemies of Labour are so desperately anxious to prevent unity in our ranks. I cannot see why we should adopt the policy recommended to us by those most anxious for our defeat.

And I infer from this one or two consequences I should like to underline. The Labour Movement of this country cannot support the rearmament programme of the National Government. For by its inherent nature this Government cannot make any war that is not an imperialist war. Its concern is not for a community, but for a class, the capitalist class. Yet, as you know, the Labour Party hesitates. There was bad diagnosis at Edinburgh, built upon the assumption that the National Government represents a community-interest transcending class. Mr. Bevin has assured Mr. Baldwin and his colleagues that the Labour Movement will be behind them if Great Britain is attacked. But behind them for what ? Does he expect this Government to be behind the Popular Front Government in France, the Soviet Government in the U.S.S.R., for the defence of democracy and socialism ? For that purpose, I could support a rearmament programme. But is there anyone here who believes that this is the purpose for which the Baldwin Government rearms ? Is there anyone here who believes that this purpose is compatible with the logic of the class-interests upon which it is built ? Is it not likely, rather, that this Government will take us into a shambles worse than 1914 ? Cannot we learn the lesson of that last war which Lenin so clearly drew ?

Or take Spain. Again there was bad diagnosis at Edinburgh—confusion and misdirection. A socialist movement ought to have seen at once that no other policy was possible than to throw the whole of its forces on the side of the Popular Front Government in Spain. But we have played with non-intervention, half-intervention, semi-demi intervention, so that not only can no one say what the Spanish policy of the Labour Party is, but its hesitation has actually helped the National

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Government implicitly to co-operate in the Fascist offensive against Spanish democracy. Wrong theory, bad practice. Here is no better illustration of the tragic results we suffer from the lack of a coherent philosophy.

Had I the time, I think I could show you that much the same is true in relation to the unemployed. Labour policy ought to be built upon the conviction that capitalism requires the unemployed to remain unemployed. Instead, it allows the problem to appear as though the issue between us and the National Government is mainly a question of more generous treatment or less generous treatment. That is why we have been unable to give a clear and precise lead on this question. That is why the great bulk of the unemployed supported the National Government in 1931. That is why, even in 1935, the masses were unable clearly to distinguish between our policy and that of the National Government. For want of a Marxist diagnosis, we left the initiative in our opponents' hands. In a parliamentary system, the loss of the initiative is the loss of the battle.

But it is not yet too late to win the campaign. There are millions of voters in this country who are dissatisfied with this Government. There are millions who, given a clear lead, would help eagerly in its overthrow. But they must be made aware that our movement knows where it is prepared to go. They must be convinced that it is prepared to march there with invincible courage and determination. We can only give them this awareness and this conviction as we unite upon the platform of a Marxist diagnosis. Until we do this, they will prefer the devil they know to the devil they do not understand. Our divisions and our uncertainties reflect themselves in the confusion of the electorate. Our bad diagnosis leads them to waver. An uncertain electorate always means a capitalist victory ; for uncertainty is the child of fear, and fear always stands by the ancient ways.

I do not doubt the sincerity of the National Executive. I do not doubt their whole-hearted suspicion of the stand taken by Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. Brailsford and other tried comrades in our movement. I do not even doubt that, in their threat to discipline us, they believe in their own wisdom. What I doubt is whether they have really thought their policy through. They are pursuing that policy of class-collaboration which assumes a neutral state serving the community as though classes did not exist, that community-consciousness which led straight to the betrayal of 1931. They are afraid of Communism because of the threats of our opponents. They are angry with the Communists because of our internecine struggles of the past twenty years.

I cannot share either their fears or their anger. I think Communists have made mistakes in the past. I think, even, they are swallowing some of their errors with an amusing, even an attractive, ingenuity. But

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whether they be seven thousand, or ten thousand, I recognise that division from them is a source of weakness, that in the policy to-day of Pollitt, of Dutt, of Dimitrov, there is a large common ground it is our business jointly to occupy. I think that unity means strength. I think it could give the lead we require. I think that lead would put new heart into our movement ; and out of that new heart would come the energy and the courage which would make us the government of the country.

Were we to become that government in this critical hour we might alter the history of the world. We shall not do so if we adopt the policy for which Ramsay MacDonald stood—the policy of placating your enemies instead of seeking to encourage your friends. We shall not do so by allowing them to define our policy and confine our initiative. We shall only do it by taking these from the objective facts of the situation. These, surely, tell us that a divided Labour Movement is a defeated Labour Movement. That is the central principle I want the members of this conference to carry back to their trade union branches, their local Labour Parties, their co-operative guilds. You know, as well as I, how disturbed and unhappy the movement is at its present position. The rank and file have the sense that it is not going forward. It waits for a lead. I think unity is the watchword to provide that lead.

And the danger is not distant but immediate. Look at Italy ; look at Germany ; look at Austria, at Greece, at the Balkans. I do not need to warn you of the gravity of the Spanish position. If Spain goes, France and Belgium may well go too ; if they, who is entitled to say that we are safe ? The tendencies towards Fascism in this country are wide and deep. It is only because capitalism feels so deeply entrenched that we are still able to hold conferences of this kind. But the sands, even here, are running out ; and every hour that we postpone unity makes our victory less hopeful. We have to learn before it is too late Benjamin Franklin's old lesson—let us hang together lest we hang separately. There is war in the air ; there are all the signs of that suppressive organisation that precedes the making of war. Unless we can achieve unity now, the final crisis will find us unready to meet it. Does there not lie on each of us, in these circumstances, a grave individual responsibility to light such a flame for unity in the heart of our movement that the leaders are compelled to light their torches at its fires ?

I want, secondly, to say a word—in the light of what Mr. Cole is to say, it must only be a word—upon the question of the Popular Front. I can support it upon two fundamental conditions only. First, it must be built upon the United Front ; without that, it can have no meaning. Secondly, whatever immediate measures of amelioration a Popular Front may propose, it must move directly against the citadel of capitalist power. It must not mean a suspension of socialist principles in the service of

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socialised liberalism. It must be the use of the machinery of democracy for the introduction of increasingly socialist purposes. It cannot be just one more effort to patch up the decaying fabric of capitalist society. So that its inspiration must come from the men and women who went on the Hunger March, the men and women who, in the East End of London, told Mosley and his Fascists they should not pass, the men who are defending our democracy outside Madrid in the International Column to-day. That Popular Front I understand and welcome. A Popular Front less than this in purpose and inspiration might well prove an embarrassment and a delusion. Built on working-class unity it is an instrument of significance ; but it can only follow its attainment.

Finally I would, with a full consciousness of perhaps insolent audacity, say one word of advice to my Communist friends. It has been said of Balliol men by other Oxford men that they have a " conscious knowledge of effortless superiority." Sometimes I feel that this is true of a good deal of Communist propaganda in relation to the Labour Party. At no time was it more urgent for them to show tolerance, understanding, even humility. Let us be clear that we are concerned with ideas and not with persons. If Mr. Morrison fights our movement for unity, let his attitude be attributed not to moral defect but to intellectual error. If Mr. Bevin thinks he can compare Sir Stafford Cripps to Sir Oswald Mosley, do not let us attack his motives ; rather let us seek to clarify his insight. Do not let us be angry with, or contemptuous about, Dr. Dalton's narrow view of the present situation ; let us rather insist that patience will bring a wider vision by argument insistently conducted on the intellectual plane. Let us realise that there is a long legacy of dissension and hostility to overcome. We shall require forbearance and generosity. We shall attain our unity as we dwell on the hopes of to-morrow and not on the fears of yesterday. With all my power I urge my Communist friends to confront this grave crisis in that spirit.

For I end by insisting on the gravity of the crisis. We have a long and grim road to travel. We shall only reach its end by recognising that what is important is our agreement and not our differences, our common objectives, our common interests. On the industrial field the workers have painfully come to see that their strength lies in their solidarity. It must be our business to make them see that this is true of the political field as well. We are at one of the turning points of history, comparable in its importance to the Reformation, the French Revolution, the great victory of October, 1917. Let us re-learn the history of those momentous events. We are fighting not only for our own emancipation ; we are fighting now for the liberties of the world. There is only one way to peace ; it is working-class unity now. There is only one way to socialism ; it is working-class unity to-day. If we act intelligently and earnestly in that

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spirit, the spirit of Owen, the spirit of Marx, the spirit of Lenin, we shall not fail. We have indeed a world to win. Let us seek to be worthy of its promise.

II.

Trade Unions and Unity

By HARRY ADAMS

THOUGH I will deal mainly with the question of unity on the industrial field, at the outset I want to say quite frankly that I stand definitely on the line of the Unity Manifesto issued by the Socialist League, Communist Party and I.L.P. a little while ago. I say quite definitely, and I always have expressed this view, that in the Labour Party to-day there is room for every working-class individual whose outlook is in favour of changing this rotten system for one of socialism.

It has been said by many that you only get fascism where you have Communists or Communist activity. That is a lie in any case, because fascism has come into operation in countries where communism is of small account. What they say can be in the main analysed to mean that we can canter through our activity, and as long as we are good boys we can have our Labour Party and any other Party and everything will be all right. But we intend to challenge capitalism in any case, and that is what the working-class movement stands for. I believe that working-class organisation and political activity must be based on the line of the class struggle. Though, quite frankly, I am not prepared to say that trade unionism to-day is based on the class struggle, and members of the trade unions are not in them because they recognise the class struggle; nevertheless the existence of trade unions proves that there is a class struggle, and the basis of trade unionism shows that there is antagonism between the workers and their employers.

It is perfectly true to say as a generalisation that greater unity is necessary, and I think that would be accepted by everybody here. In the building trade, as a result of the developments in our industry, we have a changed outlook. There is a breaking-down of the old class craft prejudices which have existed for so long. Semi-skilled sections come into the industry carrying out operations that were unheard of twenty years ago. The whole face of the industry is becoming transformed and there is a better basis of unity. At the moment we have several separate organisations all linked together in a Federation. But it is perfectly obvious that something better is required. Two things face us at the present moment: (1) to achieve greater unity; and (2) to act within the framework of our present organisations.

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First of all, before we can be leaders in the trade union movement, we should make ourselves definitely clear about the rules and constitution of both our own union and of others too. I say this, because it is not good enough merely to have a militant outlook. It is all right not to like anything and want to get rid of it, but the intelligent individual surely would recognise that there is a way in which it can be got rid of and not necessarily directly to hit out at it. We have got to take account particularly of the growth of organisation and the existence not only of general rules and constitutions, but of a National Working Rule Agreement, which in fact says there shall not be any disputes without reference to the machinery. Whether you can treat this with contempt or not is determined by the strength you have not only on one job, but throughout the industry. The fact that one particular section is more militant than another does not necessarily imply that you can outline militant tactics without consultation with those you think are slow, because there can be no real move forward until the whole of the building trade workers go forward together. There are occasions where difficulties arise on jobs, exceptional matters, where we can deal with them by the direct action of that particular job by the one section concerned, but these exceptional opportunities are becoming less and we have got to appreciate that we have to sit down and apply our intelligence to how the change can be made. Just activity on the job and saying "To hell with the rules of the Union and the National Working Rule Agreement" is not an intelligent way of facing the situation. We have got to get some change in the position as a result of understanding what the fetters are and how they can be removed, and that has got to be done by means of general propaganda carried out amongst all the building trade workers. The same position applies more or less in other industries.

In reference to the present situation inside the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives with the A.S.W. at the moment taking decisions in regard to affiliation, I want to say, even if I am charged with interference, that I hope very sincerely that, despite the defects in the structure and constitution of the Federation, the A.S.W. will decide to remain in the Federation, because I believe it will weaken the essential unity on the jobs if they go out. I can only hope they will remain in and help the rest of us who feel changes are necessary.

I am pleased to note that some of the unions in the hosiery industry have agreed on amalgamation, leaving, I believe, at the moment only one union still outside. In textiles we see movements springing up in places like Nelson and Colne in the Lancashire textile area for a better form of organisation. In mining and clothing I am also pleased to note that, whatever justification there may have been for breakaway organisations in those industries, they have had the good sense to get back inside the parent organisation, and I am sure that will make for the benefit of

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the movement generally. Then we see in the mining industry a change in the present form of organisation there. The idea of County Unions being linked up by the area or a particular area linked up together inside the Federation is thought by the most advanced members of the miners' unions not to be the best form of organisation, and they are working their way out of their own particular problems. I believe it is true to say that in Scotland they have recognised more than in any other part of Great Britain the necessity for a change, and have, as a matter of fact, effected changes in the right direction. This same tendency is to be seen in many other industries.

I mention these facts because we get a lot of carping criticism about the present form of the movement. A lot has been done. Although we are dissatisfied, although we know that there is quite a lot to do, keep it in the back of your minds that the workers in the trade union movement have done quite a lot in the direction of getting greater unity.

I hope as a result of this conference and the discussion which will take place here, going back to your various organisations and making reports, that a step further will be taken in the direction of unity, that essential unity of the industrial field, because I believe we can only have the correct political outlook when we have got the correct form of industrial organisation. I believe that if the man is properly organised at the point of production, then he cannot help but have the right political outlook.

We must all work as hard as we can in order to achieve a greater unity. It is necessary to have a common understanding of our difficulties arising out of the differing sets of circumstances, to look round the problem rather than attempt to run straight ahead, for we must recognise that complete movements forward can only be made by an understanding of each other's problems, by doing everything we can to assist each other rather than to retard each other for a temporary advantage for ourselves. This is the road we have got to take, and I trust that as a result of this great conference we shall go ahead with this question of unity both industrially and politically for the benefit of our class.

III.

The People's Front

By G. D. H. COLE

I WAS sorry I could not be here this morning to hear the discussion, but without hearing what Laski had to say I feel quite sure from what I know he was talking about, that he had an easier job than I have, because I should imagine that the vast majority of this audience, indeed practically everybody in it, is in favour of working-class unity. I think

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that, if you want to find people who are not in favour of working-class unity, it is no good coming to an ordinary conference of delegates from rank-and-file organisations, you need to go to Transport House.

Accordingly, only this afternoon are we getting down to the more difficult issues on which real controversy exists among people like ourselves who want unity, and take the desire for working-class unity as our starting point. The questions we have to discuss are the methods to adopt for getting this unity and how far unity can extend beyond the boundaries of the organised working-class movement. That is the issue I have got to face right at the start.

Anybody who begins talking about the People's Front lays himself open to very serious misunderstandings. I can illustrate one or two misunderstandings from my own experience in the past few months. Whenever I write or speak about the People's Front I am always careful to say, in my loudest and most vehement tones, that I am not in favour of any sort of arrangement between the Head Offices of the Labour and the Liberal Parties. And whenever I say or write that, immediately in the following discussion, either in the meeting or in the columns of a newspaper, somebody appears who says—"Referring to Mr. Cole's proposal for an alliance between the Liberal and Labour Parties . . . . " That happens because people have firmly rooted in their minds a habit of thinking in terms of electoral arrangements. Whatever you say, you cannot get that electoral conception out of some people's heads. However much you may repudiate the suggestion of an alliance between the head offices of the Labour and Liberal Parties, if you talk about the People's Front, that continues to be their idea of it.

I want to make perfectly clear at the beginning that any People's Front I am talking about has nothing whatsoever to do with an arrangement between the Labour and Liberal head offices. If anybody was at any time in favour of such an arrangement from the working-class side—and I certainly never was—I should have thought the manifesto issued about a fortnight ago by the Liberal organisation would have made an end of it. It was perfectly clear from that manifesto that the Liberal organisation has achieved the impossible. It has actually managed to be more reactionary than Transport House, and that takes some doing. Between Transport House and the Liberal organisation, there might even be difficulty in making an electoral arrangement, because Transport House might be too advanced in its views.

A People's Front which is to be of any use to the working class is not going to be a Popular Front of that kind. The question is, what sort of Popular Front is it going to be? There we run into an opposite danger. It is very easy indeed to collect in towns up and down Great Britain numbers of people who are in favour of a United Front and a

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People's Front. They will be a most miscellaneous collection. They will include on the one hand members of the Communist Party, active workers in the Labour Party, Co-operators, trade unionists and other sections of the working-class movement, and they will include also a very large number of homeless and wandering intellectuals—lovers of peace, members of the League of Nations Union, rank-and-file Radicals and Nonconformists, decent people of every sort and kind, who have a vague desire to be progressive, to get together with other like-minded people, and think the People's Front is a good notion without having any clear understanding of what it involves. I imagine, if we were to set out at this moment to try and build up a People's Front on a basis of individual membership we should get into it a host of such persons, and we should make ourselves a laughing stock. We should have no solid backing behind us. Any People's Front of that kind would not merely be perfectly useless from the point of view of achieving solid results, but would also do the whole idea of the People's Front a very great deal of harm. I want you, then, to get out of your heads the notion of a People's Front arising simply as a coming together of persons of goodwill. Persons of goodwill are always coming together ; and mighty little they achieve when they do come together, unless there is something more than goodwill behind them. Not that I think goodwill unimportant. Far from it. Goodwill is very important indeed ; but it needs stiffening with a solid core of organised working-class determination if it is to achieve any result. It is perfectly clear, if we are to have a People's Front that is to be of any use from the standpoint of the working class, that the People's Front has to be based upon the working class, to have solid working-class foundations, and to be built upwards from real working-class unity. Unless you have working-class unity as the foundation of your People's Front, then the People's Front is a futile thing to aim at.

It is then no good trying to build the People's Front without working-class unity as the basis of it. That means that at this moment those of us who favour the *idea* of a People's Front are not attempting in the immediate future to bring such a thing into being. We recognise that conditions are not ripe for it, we recognise that much more in the nature of working-class unity has to be achieved before the People's Front can exist. We don't want it to come into existence until the conditions are ready for it, but we do want to get people familiar with the idea, to get the propaganda to them, so that when we have got that essential condition of working-class unity we shall be able to go forward on the basis of that unity and broaden out to this wider appeal of the People's Front.

Accordingly there is no conflict of opinion between the urging of working-class unity and the advocacy of the People's Front on anything like the lines I am putting before you.

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We want in both cases as our first objective the full unity of the working class, and then, in the view of those among us who want the People's Front, we can go on to broaden it out to something wider. One thing I am sure is common between us all, and that is a clear understanding among ourselves that one of our main reasons for wanting working-class unity, for wanting the People's Front, lies not in any particular love for organisations of that sort, but in a sense of the deep and utter rottenness of the present Labour leadership, and the urgent need for getting the working class better and more actively led. We realise how urgent it is to escape from the desperate situation in which the present leadership is placing us, to find a new way of active service for all of us who want to play an effective part for Socialism in the present world crisis.

We see that the task of building up a new leadership involves new ways of organisation ; and that is for us the underlying idea of the People's Front as the means of getting a new and younger leadership into the Labour Party—a leadership coming far more directly from the rank and file of the party : a leadership of action.

What is wrong with our Labour Party leadership as it is ? Nay more, what is wrong with a large part of the active workers in local Labour Parties in some parts of the country, and with the state of mind of many of those who are on the fringe of the Labour Party and are taking no active interest, and hardly even conscious of the seriousness of the crisis which is upon us to-day ? It is surely that our Labour Movement in this country lacks anything in the nature of a clear philosophy. It is that our Labour Movement has always lived from hand to mouth, scornful of mere theorising, of having any clear-cut conceptions in its own mind. We have muddled along without a philosophy, without any clear conception of the class struggle, without any comprehensive definition either of our objectives or of the methods we must use ; and the badness of our leadership arises precisely out of that opportunism.

Those of us who are urging unity and the People's Front are doing so because we believe that these movements of mass-feeling can be made the means of putting some notion of philosophy, some notion of the general way of advance to Socialism into the minds of an increasing number of people, of young people above all. We know ideas do not get into people's heads by just preaching to them, but only when the concrete facts that have to be faced are such that no clear answers can be given except on the basis of a clear philosophy. This opportunity we have now. Every day before our eyes world facts are throwing up so many new lessons, which require a clear philosophical approach, that now it is possible to endow the Labour Movement with that solid basis of working-class philosophy it has hitherto lacked. Call it Marxism for short.

Now that is what we have to set out to do, and the question is how to do it. I should define as the first object of the United Front and the

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People's Front, the grave duty of bringing this Government down. We must bring this Government down both in the interests of the British people, and even more in the interests of the cause of the working class and of Socialism throughout the world. We all know that this Government is bad in home affairs, but is worse in foreign affairs. We all know that it is damaging the cause of all peoples who stand for democracy the world over, and we all know that the pace of this betrayal is growing constantly more rapid as Fascism grows more confident and aggressive with every success. It is, I hope, quite intolerable to any of us to contemplate the prospect of this Government remaining in power over its normal course of years, and living out its legal term whatever crimes it may commit. I hope this means that any movement for a United Front or a People's Front has more in contemplation than the winning of a parliamentary election in 1940, or whenever the next election is due to come. Who knows whether there will be a General Election in 1940, or whether we may not find ourselves by then in the middle of a great war, or even in the aftermath of a great war—and heaven knows what the situation will be then, or whether there will be any such things as Parliaments or elections left at all? It is no use banking on a General Election in the year 1940. We need to take much nearer views than that, and to turn our attention to bringing the life of this Government to an end long before 1940, because its continuance endangers the cause of the people in one country after another, and Lord alone knows how much more mischief it can do if it stays in office during the time that still remains of the life of this Parliament.

No, we cannot afford to define the basis of the People's Front mainly in terms of an electoral arrangement, because we want our United Front and our People's Front to act not in 1940, but long before then. What we are after is a movement that will be able to make it difficult, and even impossible, for this Government to go on misgoverning the country, and the only sort of Front that is worth thinking of is one that has as its clear objective this twofold task.

We do not believe that the National Government represents the will of the people; and therefore we want to turn it out. That of course means that we want a movement which is above all else a movement of action. Of course it must be a movement of thinking as well; for men cannot act rightly unless they think; but it must be a movement of thinking with a view to action, action here and now, and not for mere talk. In so far as we want a Popular Front, I hope we want it because we believe that the action of a Popular Front is capable of making the work of this Government in betraying the people difficult and finally impossible.

Now that means, as I see it, that what we have to do is to mobilise public opinion over the widest possible field on every issue as it comes up—

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and we need have no fear that there will not be enough issues coming up on which we can base our appeal. With the world in the state in which it is now issues will be coming up fast, all the time, more and more dangerous issues, issues that more and more require courage in order to face them. It is our task to get the Labour Movement to such a stage that it can effectively assume the leadership of all the mass of democratic opinion that world events are stirring up, and mobilise all this mass of opinion behind a determined policy for the defence of peace and liberty and the advance towards Socialism. Now, I agree that the means of setting about that task lie primarily in doing all we can to achieve working-class unity, but I believe we must in addition organise friendly opinion in a great many different ways by taking definite stands on every particular issue as it becomes critical, and joining to our forces anyone who is prepared to support us upon such issues.

As an example, you know how very large an amount of sympathy the cause of the Spanish Government and the Spanish people has excited not only inside the working-class movement here, but also among all those disorganised people of goodwill of whom I was speaking earlier on. All these people, who can achieve nothing by writing to the papers, and holding little meetings of their own, and so on, need something round which they can rally; and then they become a formidable practical force which can work for Spain, for peace and against Fascism. It is not our duty to select whom we shall have to co-operate with us and to reject anyone we happen not to like, but to see to it that the terms of co-operation are based upon forms of organisation in which the working-class parties play the lead. The working-class nucleus must be so strong that it becomes the leading force in the wider organisation which, if it is strong and determined, it can safely help in building up. Once get a clear working-class lead and you can afford to accept any allies, from whatever source they come.

The Labour Party is in a much better position for organising co-operation in the help to Spain, for Peace and against Fascism than anyone else can possibly be. Why doesn't it do these things? Why doesn't it try to make it impossible for the Government to go on misgoverning Great Britain? Why doesn't it lead the widespread sympathy that the people feel for Spain? The leaders of the Labour Party are afraid of action—they are more afraid of people on their immediate Left than of those on their Right. They are not thinking of what they can do to fling the force of the working class into the desperate struggle between World Capitalism and World Socialism, but only of their strictly constitutional task as His Majesty's Opposition in Parliament. They regard themselves not as a force against the Government, but as a cog in the machinery of Government; and even if His Majesty changes somewhat suddenly—the Labour Party does not change. Its Head Office thinks entirely in Parliamentary terms.

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Jean Jacques Rousseau once said that the English people was free once in seven years—when it elected a Parliament. The implication was that when once the people had chosen its rulers, there was nothing more for it to do until the next election came round. Nowadays we elect Parliaments only for five years ; but are we prepared to accept the view that true democracy means that the people must sleep soundly between elections ? I do not take that view of democracy. I hold that democracy involves an active people who, when they do not like those who are governing them, are fully prepared to give their governors a kick in the pants. I am sure you want, as I want, not the type of democracy that finds favour with those who, having grown grey in the service of the Labour and Trade Union Movements, are now principally desirous of a quiet life, but the democracy that appeals to men and women who are prepared to live dangerously—to those who have enough initiative to stand up to the Government when they hold that it is betraying the people's cause. The only people who ever get anything done are those who are prepared to go to trouble in order to do it or to give trouble in order to get it done. There must be and will be a great deal more trouble for this Government—and for the leaders of the Labour Party, if they will not take the lead against it.

There is one aspect of the People's Front that it is vital to consider if the right course is to be taken. This is to create a movement that from day to day is continuously active on immediate issues. Now, in practice, a movement of that sort must be based on Trade Unionism. Trade Unionism is the force that can act from day to day, making things difficult for the governing class, continually asserting its claims and seeking redress for its economic grievances, and therewith creating through the country a spirit of enthusiasm and revolt. As a basis for our People's Front we need an active and assertive Trade Unionism—energetically organising the workers in the new industries all over the South of England, bringing into its ranks the blackcoats and the technicians and all the hosts of workers of whom Trade Unionism has so far only touched the fringe, and making all these workers conscious by leading them in the daily struggle for better conditions.

Oxford, where I come from, used to be a dead-alive hole from the working-class standpoint. It is a good deal livelier now—thanks to the work that has been done in organising the busmen and the Pressed Steel factory, and so on, and using the organisation to get really pressing grievances relieved. What has been done in Oxford can be done elsewhere, wherever there is an active group ready to take the lead, and to put in hard work and enthusiasm. The workers are ready for a lead ; but at present their leaders are keener on presenting to the capitalists a United Backside than a United Front. It is sometimes argued that the effect of an active policy of this sort is to antagonise the middle classes. Don't

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you believe it. Of course it will anger those middle-class people who are in any case your enemies. But a large section of the middle classes will be affected quite in the opposite way. The more formidable the working-class movement shows itself to be, the more will it command middle-class respect and support. Directly the workers show they mean business other people get interested, know they are doing something, and want to join in. This is commonsense, and it has been made perfectly clear by what has happened wherever any large degree of working-class activity has taken place—as for example in France. It is not by being respectable that we shall win converts, but by being active and formidable.

You cannot conceivably win by running away. In trying to build up this movement and keep it continually active, however much our attention may be concentrated on foreign affairs—and the world situation is finally critical—we cannot afford to neglect home affairs. Foreign affairs are more difficult for the man in the street to understand—he only begins to understand them when he has already become conscious of the struggle in which he is involved at home.

Naturally, therefore, a very large proportion of trade union and working-class people see things at home much more clearly than things abroad. However much our own attention may be concentrated on world affairs—and rightly so concentrated—we have to direct a great deal of our day-to-day propaganda to home affairs.

But in this propaganda it will not suffice to fasten all our attention on the Means Test and the unemployed. We have to realise that for the moment, except in the Depressed Areas, capitalist industry is booming, and the majority of the workers are again earning fairly regular wages. We have, of course, to keep up our attack on the Means Test and to accentuate our campaign for the improvement of conditions in the Depressed Areas. I fully agree that the Hunger Marches have been the best piece of work we have done for many a long day. But such campaigns are not enough. We have to realise that with the condition of industry as it is now it is impossible to rouse the whole country on the cry of better treatment for the unemployed. In those parts of the country where capitalism is doing well it is impossible to make most men realise that there are still millions of people remaining who are doing very badly indeed. In times of good trade you cannot stir up the same sort of excitement on behalf of the unemployed as in bad times. Therefore, we have to broaden the basis of activity, and to embark upon a new agitation which must consist of waking up the whole Trade Union Movement to the urgency of fighting for higher wages, improved conditions and shorter hours of labour. We are now in the middle of a big industrial boom, a time when Trade Unionists can afford to take risks. But the

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Trade Union Movement is for the most part still asleep. We have to wake it up quickly, before the opportunity is lost. The more we wake it up the more we shall be preparing the ground for victory in our campaign for working-class unity in the first place, and the more we shall, by winning respect of large sections outside the Labour Movement, be laying firm foundations for the People's Front.

Supposing we get active day-to-day agitation for improving conditions in industry, and we build up working-class unity on the basis of day-to-day agitation. Then, how should we go on after that towards organising a wider People's Front? The answer is that I do not know. It is impossible to know just yet what the conditions will be. I do know that under no conditions I can imagine would it be desirable to draw in the Liberal Party as a party or under its existing leadership. Our task is not to join forces with the Liberal Party, but to detach from the present Liberal leadership those elements which do really belong to the Left. We only want elements which either break away from the Liberal Party or, within it, achieve effective opposition to the present reactionary leadership.

For the present, it is impossible to foretell what form the conflict inside the Liberal Party will take, or with what elements in it co-operation will turn out to be practicable. As to that, we can only wait and see. Nor can we tell what other progressive elements, at present ranking neither as Liberal nor as Socialist, will rally to the cause of democracy as the crisis becomes more acute and the appeal is made for the widest possible co-operation on specific issues, such as Spanish defence. We can only carry on with our propaganda on lines which will make it easy for decent-minded people to join hands with us, whatever their political past may have been. Just that, and not any sort of electoral bargain, is what I at any rate mean by the movement for a People's Front. Instead of insisting that we will have nothing to do with people who are not ready to go all the way with us, or to call themselves Socialists or Communists, or even plain Labour, we have to realise that in war there are only two sides and, while reinforcing our own Socialist position by the achievement of working-class unity, to ensure that as many people as possible shall be for us rather than against us when the crisis comes. We cannot form the People's Front now ; but we can prepare the way for it by giving our propaganda the correct appeal. Naturally we, with a different electoral system from that of France and a different people to appeal to, cannot follow precisely the methods that have been so successful there in creating the Popular Front. But we can show the people in the middle that we mean business, and so earn their respect ; and we can show our willingness to co-operate with them, and so enlist the help of many of them. This, and no more than this—this, and no less than this—is what I mean by urging the necessity, on a basis of working-class unity, of establishing the People's Front.

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WAR LOANS, REARMAMENT AND LABOUR POLICY

By A. F. PAPWORTH

(*Executive Member, Transport and General Workers' Union*)

THE announcement of the Government's intention to raise £400 millions by loan for war purposes, in addition to the colossal budget expenditure, making an officially admitted total of at least £1,500 millions in five years, has come as a staggering shock to public opinion, and should awaken the entire Labour Movement to the urgent necessity to take a stand on this issue.

The support for rearmament by powerful sections of the Labour leadership has sown confusion in many sections of the Labour Movement. It is therefore more than ever important to re-state the true Socialist position on this question.

Fundamentally rearmament implies the strengthening of the ultimate weapon upon which the power of the ruling class depends. In the words of a diehard imperialist: "It (the British Army) protects the commercial enterprise of our merchant princes, finds new outlets for our manufacturers. It guards our seaports at home and abroad; it assists the civil police against the proletariat." (Lieut.-Colonel C. Cooper-King in *The Story of the British Army*.) Other imperialist writers make equally clear the position of the armed forces as a weapon of the ruling class:

> The control of armed forces implies the possession of power of no mean magnitude even in times of formal peace, and is therefore customarily found in the hands of persons or institutions dominant in a given society. (*Encyclopædia of Social Sciences*, Vol. II., p. 199.)

In British history the Army has invariably been used to impede necessary social change demanded by the people. During the first half of the 19th century the great movement which eventually led to the establishment of universal suffrage was continually held back by the use of the armed forces. We may instance the Battle of Peterloo. On a day in August, 1819, an orderly meeting was being held at St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, women and children were present, and the majority of people were dressed in their best holiday attire. The meeting, which was being held to demand universal suffrage and annual Parliaments, was assaulted by troops, 14 being killed and 618 injured.

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Passing from these early days to the present century we may instance Winston Churchill's request to the War Office in 1911 to hold 25,000 soldiers in readiness for strike-breaking on London docks. Again in 1911 the *Times* reported that the Government had decided to use Royal Engineers to run trains in the event of a Rail strike—a strike which resulted for the first time in Trade Union recognition for the railwaymen. It was eventually decided, however, that this would be too dangerous, but an overwhelming display of troops was made (again at the instance of Mr. Winston Churchill) when the big Rail Strike actually began. It is indeed surprising to find that the Trade Union Movement to-day has so far forgotten its own history and the rôle of Mr. Winston Churchill, that the General Secretary of the T.U.C., Sir Walter Citrine, can dare to advocate rearmament on the same platform with this great enemy of Trade Unionism.

Finally in that most important clash between democracy and the ruling class, the General Strike of 1926, thousands of trade unionists will still remember the notorious Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies, organised by military chiefs, the use of Naval ratings for strike breaking, and organised demonstrations of soldiers intended to intimidate the people.

The examples of the intervention of the Army in the struggles of the British people at home are very many, but have either been on too small a scale or are too long ago to have exposed its true character to the great mass of the people in this country.

In the Colonies, where repression is much more vital to the British imperialists, this ultimate weapon of the ruling class has been used much more freely. Sir Samuel Hoare himself explains to us how Britain is to retain power in India and to what extent the new Constitution really gives power to any section of the Indian people :

> The Army, the ultimate power in India, is to remain under the undivided control of Parliament. (House of Commons, March 27, 1933.)

In many other British Colonies, in Kenya, Nigeria, Gold Coast and Malay, we find the Army used to suppress even the most elementary democratic rights of the native populations, and in particular the right to establish Trade Unions. We need only instance the case of Harry Thuku who was arrested for forming a Trade Union to fight a 33 per cent. wage reduction ; a demonstration to the prison to demand his release was fired upon by troops and a large number were killed.

The notorious terror of the Black and Tans in Ireland is only another example of the contempt of our rulers for democracy and their readiness to use arms to maintain their rule.

In general the ruling class maintains control over the British Army by ensuring that the officers are recruited from those sections of the wealthier

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classes which are unlikely to be tainted by socialist or even progressive ideas.

> It (the Army) is monastic in character, an Army apart from the nation and walled up within an archaic discipline. In a way an aristocratic caste founded upon ancient traditions.
>
> There can be no question that for a century now our regimental officers have come from . . . the aristocracy and upper middle classes ; they are men of good birth, of honour, and were in former days men of wealth. (*The Army in My Time*, by Major-General J. F. C. Fuller, 1935.)

Can we be at all surprised if to-day the majority of British officers show unbounded admiration for General Franco, or if plans for helping the French Fascists in the event of a Fascist rebellion in France are being discussed in Army circles ?

Not until we understand this rôle of the British armed forces as the spear-head of reaction can we see rearmament in its true light. The Fascist uprising in Spain organised by the officer caste has in fact raised the whole question in a forcible way. Spain is, too, no exception to the general rule. In Italy the Fascist bands which destroyed the working-class organisations in 1920-22 were trained by Army Officers and were provided on a large scale with equipment by the Army. In Germany the Nazi Party was founded by Army Officers and has received throughout the whole of its history the active and indispensable support of the Reichswehr.

To-day the world offensive of Fascism is the main issue facing the Labour Movement of this country. The British armed forces with their present political complexion are a force on the side of Fascism. Ever larger sections of the British ruling class are abandoning democracy. In the words of J. A. Hobson, " Every increase of the army and navy enhances their numerical strength and the political power they exert."

Opposition to rearmament is not just a Socialist policy. It must be the policy of everyone interested in the preservation of democracy. If a Labour Government were returned in this country one of the most urgent questions with which that Government would be faced would be the active sabotage and open hostility of the armed forces.

The forces can only be made harmless if democracy can win a sufficient proportion of the rank and file. In 1919 it is true to say that the Government was forced to hesitate in using the Army against the people. The military authorities actually informed the Government during the big Rail Strike, when soldiers were asked to guard all railway stations, that they could not be relied upon for such a job. Since that time the reactionary officer caste has succeeded, to a large extent, in weeding those men with good working-class traditions out of the Army in particular, and, but to a lesser extent, out of the Navy and Air Force. Only a vigorous

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campaign by the whole Labour Movement for the democratisation of the services can again ensure the co-operation of any large sections of the armed forces with a Labour Government.

For true Socialists and democrats, therefore, rearmament, if proved necessary against the war offensive of Fascism, would only be supported on two conditions, firstly, with some guarantee of the real democratisation of the armed forces, secondly, with a Government in power which we can be confident will use those armed forces and the diplomatic power and prestige it derives from them on the side of collective security and peace.

Here it is not necessary to elaborate on the foreign policy of the present Government. It has been shown in the LABOUR MONTHLY, in an excellent pamphlet by W. Rust on *Rearmament and the Labour Movement*, and in many other publications, how the diplomatic power which Great Britain derives from the strength of its armed forces is being used on the side of the Fascist world offensive and not in defence of democracy and Peace. War is but the " continuation of policy by other means," and with our present Government in power we can be quite sure that the British armed forces will never be used to stem the tide of Fascism.

So much for the more general aspects of the question. Rearmament to-day is not, however, just a matter of the armed forces. Rearmament is war preparation ; in considering the details of the rearmament plans the military authorities and the Government have only one main consideration in mind, namely, to be in the strongest possible position to win a war if it breaks out. The Committee of Imperial Defence has actually to consider all the possible military situations likely to arise and design the rearmament plan so that it is in general adapted to meet these situations. The general line of the Committee of Imperial Defence is to prepare for the defence of the Empire, of British " interests " and, in general, assume responsibilities for the defence of World Capitalism. This latter " responsibility " is the explanation of the encouragement of Fascism.

All the war situations, which the Committee of Imperial Defence considers, are situations where the Government could not count on the support of the people. Further, they are situations where the Government could be sure to meet with tremendous opposition. The people will not be tricked into believing again that every war which the Government chooses to engage in, is a war to save democracy. The Committee of Imperial Defence only envisages a war to save the privileges of the ruling class, and the people will never again be persuaded that such a war can serve their interests.

Part of rearmament is thus the preparation for the complete regimentation of the people which will be necessary in an " unpopular " war. And as Lord Swinton said in the House of Commons, the Committee of

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Imperial Defence had already formulated plans to deal with " man-power and trade in wartime . . . food supplies, oil supplies, censorship and war emergency legislation." In actual fact we may say that the Government already has plans laid for the suspension of all democratic rights.

" War is no longer a struggle between small mercenary forces nor even between vast armies of conscripts. It has grown into a conflict between nation and nation, in which all the moral, physical and material resources of the peoples concerned are involved." (Major-General Rowan-Robinson, *Security?*) So the " moral, physical and material resources " of Britain are being considered by the military authorities as a part of the rearmament plan. The political attitude of the population is, in fact, the decisive factor under " moral resources " ; and in the war situations which the Committee of Imperial Defence envisages the conservation of those " moral resources " implies the suppression of free speech and the stamping out or dragooning of the Labour Movement.

Taken in conjunction with a frank expression of opinion by Marshal Foch that, " one thing only is of importance, the point of preparation reached at the actual outbreak of war," we see how the drive against democracy and towards Fascism are a direct consequence of the present rearmament. This drive is certainly meeting with very great resistance, but as the international situation becomes more critical, it is likely to be intensified to such an extent, that unless the British Labour Movement can be united and activised, the democratic forces in this country are soon likely to be in open retreat before the advance of militarism.

The spearhead of the Government's drive will be in the basic industries. " Industrial preparation for war is the complement of military preparation, and without it military preparation is futile. It follows, therefore, that industrial mobilisation is as important as military." (*The Army in My Time*, Major-General J. F. C. Fuller.) " The next war . . . would be very much a problem as to what extent and how effectively they could mobilise the industrial side of the nation." (Lord Melchett, in the House of Lords.)

The radical suppression of the " will of the people " becomes even more vital in view of the development of the air-weapon, submarine and the new tactics which accompany the new technique : " The military object will not be to assault the outer ring of the enemy's armed forces, but the internal organs of command, intercommunication and supply. And as the whole of these and the fighting troops depend for their existence on the maintenance of political authority, and as political authority can be changed by the will of the people, the civil population becomes the main target." (*The Army in My Time*, Major-General J. F. C. Fuller.) Here again the population in the basic industries is considered most vital : " In manufacturing districts such as these, supporting heavy

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industries, the will for war may be broken entirely ; for psychological reasons the artisan, especially if he is a machine operative, is particularly liable to depression and panic." (Air-Commodore L. E. O. Charlton.) Here we may include " political understanding " under the phrase " psychological reasons," and read " active opposition " for " depression and panic."

The dismissal of five dockyard workers, who were guilty of nothing except the possession of a good working-class political understanding, without any explanation and without according them any right of appeal, has shown up the Government's fear of militant Trade Unionism in the armament industries, a fear based on the above considerations. The dismissal of these men is a very serious matter, for it is a direct challenge to Trade Union principles, dismissal without any stated reason and without any right of appeal, and gives a lead to those hundreds of employers manufacturing armaments to weed out carefully just those workers who are able through their experience and ability to build strong Trade Union organisation in these factories. It is no coincidence that precisely during the last few weeks a spying organisation in the Unions has been developing on a scale not seen since the Great War.

It is of the greatest importance that the Trade Union Movement should take a firm stand in defence of these dockyard workers, but we can learn the lesson that now more than ever before, is it vital for us to fight for the principle of " no victimisation " up to the hilt and so bring the spy system to nought ?

Without strong Trade Union organisation in the vital industries the workers there are at the mercy of the Government, and further, the unorganised factories are a breach in the whole democratic front. In an unorganised factory no resistance is possible, either before or after the outbreak of war.

It is not my task here to teach the militant Trade Unionist how to build the Trade Unions, for much has been written on the specific problems of building factory committees, limitation of dilution, strict observance of fair wages clauses, and so on. But a serious word needs to be said to the political side of the Movement.

At any period of time certain industries and certain sections of workers assume specially great importance. The political movement must concentrate its energies more particularly on these sections. At the present time the engineering industries, transport and dockers assume especial importance, for it is these sections which can decide the whole question of working-class unity. The establishment of such unity in this country could have just as profound an effect on the Trade Union Movement as did the establishment of unity in France ; in France it is now true to say that there is not a single factory in the key industries which is not

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organised. It is not the job of the political side of the movement, but rather of the Trade Unionists themselves, to be concerned with the detailed Trade Union problems, but it is the most important job of the political parties to carry their propaganda into every engineering factory, every bus, tram or lorry depôt, and throughout every section of the docks. Whether our specific campaign at the moment is in support of a Labour candidate at elections, in support of the International Column now fighting so valiantly in Spain, or around our programme for the Depressed Areas, that campaign must first and foremost be directed to these sections of the working class whose actions are so vital at the present time. This, perhaps, is the most important task of every single local branch of the working-class political parties.

But it is not only these decisive sections of workers who are affected. The Government's Air Raid precautions schemes will affect every section; pressure is being exerted on the unemployed at many Labour Exchanges to join the Army; employers are giving extra holidays and other privileges to those employees who will join the Territorials; the tremendous expenditure is lowering the standard of living; the protection of agriculture for military reasons is greatly increasing the spread of malnutrition and consequently of disease; the already huge vested interests in armaments are rapidly developing their stranglehold; the Press, the wireless and the cinema are being used to an increasing extent to propagate the ideas of the British War Office.

In a few weeks' time Parliament will be discussing the Arms Estimates for the ensuing year, together with the Bill authorising the £400 million Arms Loan. During these weeks it is the task of the Labour Movement to see that the issues at stake are made quite clear. If the Labour Movement again shows itself divided in its opposition to rearmament, if the Labour vote against the Estimates and the War Loan proposals is not unanimous, the National Government will be able to go forward with its plans with the greatest confidence and the Labour Movement will once again receive a serious setback. It is the job of every Labour man or woman to make his position clear to his M.P. during the next few weeks. If Labour votes unanimously against the Government and exposes the rearmament plan, then some of the damage done by the Edinburgh Conference will be repaired and the way opened to decisively defeating this National Government and its policy of war.

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HITLER AND EUROPE

By ROBERT DELL

THERE are some signs that, both in England and in France, Hitler's speech on January 30 is more and more recognised as what it was—one of the most sinister that he has yet made. As the *Journal des Nations* put it, "the hands held out by Eden, Neville Chamberlain and Léon Blum remain suspended in the void." To all the questions implicitly put to him by Eden in his speech in the House of Commons on January 19, Hitler replied with a categorical NO. He will have nothing to do with any general European settlement, he will accept no international control of armaments (without which any limitation or reduction of armaments is impossible), he will have nothing to do with the League of Nations or any similar system of settling disputes by arbitration or international mediation. Germany must be the sole judge of her own requirements in the matter of armaments and everything else. Yvon Delbos might well say, as he said on January 31 at Châteauroux, that in these conditions negotiations with Germany are extremely difficult. In fact they are impossible and the sooner the fact is recognised by the British and French Governments the better.

Those who listened in to the speech here remarked the irritated tone of the latter part in which Hitler dealt with foreign policy. Evidently he had been annoyed by Eden's speech on January 19, and his references to Eden were often ironical and barely polite. Perhaps Hitler thought—not without some reason—that what Eden said did not necessarily bind the British Government as a whole. British policy has too often differed widely from Eden's speeches and even from those of his predecessor, Sir Samuel Hoare. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Eden is used as an instrument—no doubt unwittingly—for deceiving the public about the real nature of British policy. Hitler's omission even to mention Léon Blum's speech at Lyons on January 24 was no doubt a studied insult. It has been suggested that the omission was due to the fact that Blum is a "non-Aryan," but it seems to me much more likely that it was intended to show that, in Hitler's opinion, France no longer counts as a factor in European politics. Unhappily, there is too much reason for that opinion.

There have, however, been some recent manifestations of independence on the part of the French Government. The first was the refusal to follow the English lead by stopping French volunteers from going to Spain without waiting for Germany and Italy to stop sending reinforcements to Franco. The German and Italian Governments are repeating their dilatory tactics of last August and meanwhile hurrying more

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men to Spain, but at least the French Government has not been duped a second time. More significant was the vigorous action by which the French Government prevented German troops from being sent to Spanish Morocco. On January 6, several French diplomatic and consular representatives abroad informed their government that German troops were on the point of starting for Morocco. One contingent had already left Munich on December 31 and was being sent through Italy. On January 7 Viénot, who was in charge of the Foreign Ministry during the absence of Delbos, sent for the German ambassador and, without mentioning the information received, warned him that, if any German troops were sent to Spanish Morocco the French army would go in and turn them out. The next day Hitler held a sort of council of war at which the opposition of the German General Staff to taking any risk for the sake of Franco was so strong that he had to give way and the troops did not go to Morocco. This was the first time that the present French Government had taken any step of such importance without consulting London. Had the Sarraut Cabinet acted without consulting London on March 7, the German troops would have been withdrawn from the Rhineland. And, had the British and French Governments, or either of them, called Hitler's bluff in a similar way long ago, there would have been no war and Europe would not be in the state of chaos in which it is at present. It is a hard saying, but it is the fear of taking the risk of war in any circumstances that has brought us to this pass and increased the risk of war. To borrow a simile by Gabriel Peri, Communist deputy for Versailles, in a remarkable speech that he made recently in the French Chamber, the British and French Governments have gone on paying ransom to the gangsters without any guarantee that they will deliver peace alive.

Léon Blum's speech at Lyons on January 24—perhaps the best speech that he has ever made—also suggested that France may at last free herself from British domination and have a policy of her own. One of the most significant passages in that speech was the following:

> We cannot remain indifferent spectators in Europe. We are members of the League of Nations, faithful to its principles, faithful to its Covenant. We have made friendships to which we remain entirely bound. We have contracted obligations to which we remain entirely faithful.

I listened in to the speech and no passage was more enthusiastically applauded than this, except perhaps that in which Blum said that it had been proved that a "violently pacific" government was "not incapable of defending the interests, the dignity and the security of France." The audience at Lyons understood, as everybody, including the Germans, has understood, that Blum was referring in particular to the French obligation to defend Czechoslovakia against unprovoked aggression and that he was replying to recent German threats against that country.

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But Blum was also rejecting the policy of the British Foreign Office—the policy of leaving Hitler a free hand in eastern Europe.

The Foreign Office is now giving out through its accredited journalists, the " diplomatic correspondents " of the English daily papers, that the Western Powers—and therefore the League of Nations—could do little or nothing to help the eastern Powers if the latter were attacked by Germany, because the western frontiers of Germany are now impregnable. It is clear from what Blum said at Lyons that this view is not shared by the French Government and, indeed, it is only an excuse for a policy of betrayal. Even if it be true that the German frontiers are impregnable—and the experience of history authorises a certain scepticism on that point—the conclusion that France could do nothing to help Czechoslovakia, for instance, is not justified.

Thus, although it is too much to hope that the British Government will change its policy, there is some reason to hope that the French Government will now take a line of its own. Much nonsense has been talked about the division of Europe into two " ideological blocks," one Fascist, the other Communist. Such a division is impossible, for there is only one Communist country in Europe. The Fascist block already exists, but the rest of Europe is disunited, thanks to British policy acquiesced in by France. It is not a question of forming a Communist, or even an anti-Fascist, block, but of forming a block or combination of the nations that desire peace to defend themselves against the aggressive and predatory nations—Germany and Italy and their satellites. The French Government has recently taken an important step towards that desirable end by proposing a pact of mutual assistance to the three Powers of the Little Entente. Unfortunately, when the Little Entente proposed such a pact to France last October, the present French Government, under British pressure, refused it for fear of offending Mussolini. This was one of the disastrous consequences of the fatuous policy of trying to conciliate Mussolini and detach Italy from Germany by betraying Abyssinia, which has so completely failed. A further consequence was to drive Jugoslavia and Roumania into the arms of Germany, with the result that those two countries have up to the present refused to agree to the pact proposed by France. The matter has been postponed until the meeting of the Little Entente in May, but will the Little Entente still exist in May ? Moreover, under German influence, Jugoslavia has made what is practically an alliance with Bulgaria and thus for all practical purposes both the Balkan Entente and the Little Entente have been dislocated. After the Montreux conference last year Turkey offered a pact of mutual assistance to France. That offer, too, was refused for fear of offending Mussolini. It has, I have reason to believe, been renewed and perhaps it will now be accepted. In any case Franco-Turkish

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relations have been made thoroughly friendly by the agreement in regard to the Sandjak of Alexandretta.

On March 7, 1936, the Polish Government informed the Sarraut Cabinet, then in office in France, that Poland would support any action taken by France to obtain the withdrawal of the German troops from the Rhineland and would fulfil all the obligations of the Franco-Polish alliance, if such action led Germany to make war on France. The Sarraut Cabinet, after consulting London, refrained from taking action and the Polish opinion that France was too weak to be depended on was confirmed. Nevertheless, the present French Government succeeded in improving Franco-Polish relations when Marshal Ridz-Smigly visited Paris. Later on, however, Colonel Beck, who had refused to accompany the Marshal and opposed the visit, went to Berlin and then to London, where he was encouraged by the British Foreign Office to continue his pro-German policy, masquerading as "neutrality."

One result has been that the League of Nations has capitulated to the Nazis in Danzig and allowed the Polish Government to come to an agreement with them to secure Polish interests. The French delegation to the recent session of the League Council rightly urged that, if the League could not maintain its authority in Danzig and insist on the preservation of the Constitution of the Free City, it would be better for the League to wash its hands of the whole business and not appoint another High Commissioner. This was also Eden's view, but Beck, terrified at the prospect of being left alone to face the Germans in Danzig, protested against such a violation of the Treaty of Versailles. The New High Commissioner's only function will be that of acting as intermediary between the Danzig Government and Poland. In spite of all this, it is clear that there is strong opposition in Poland to Beck's policy and the French Government may yet win back Poland—but only if the Poles are convinced that France will adopt a firm policy towards Germany and Italy.

In the West, Belgium has been for all practical purposes detached from France with the approval, if not at the instigation of the British Government, and Hitler's offer to guarantee Belgian neutrality is intended to keep Belgium neutral in the event of a German attack on France. Thus the British attempt to separate France from her friends and allies and put her at the mercy of England has to a great extent succeeded. France, however, could save the situation even now, if only Léon Blum will take the initiative without any further delay in forming, with or without England, that combination of the pacific forces of Europe that alone can avert war, if it be strong enough to discourage the aggressive Powers from risking war.

Geneva. February 9, 1937.

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SPAIN AND THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

By "U.H.P."

IF one thing, more than any other, frightened the capitalist governments all over the world during 1936, in their relation with the workers and peasants, it was the possibility of a People's Front against fascism. So it would strike the ordinary person, at any rate, reading the vituperation which mention of the People's Front arouses in the press of half-a-hundred countries. When an American journal specialising in summarised news —"Current History"—declares in its January issue that the People's Front "has been the most significant anti-fascist development of the year . . . . a symbol with an appeal equivalent to that of the New Deal in America," it is paying the best of all tributes: an enemy's.

The building of the People's Front against fascism brought together millions of French workers and peasants in mighty demonstrations and struggles that drove back the hooligans of the "Croix de Feu," defeated the heavily-subsidised pro-Fascist parties at the General Election, and cleared the way for the gigantic stay-in strikes of last summer. In China, the struggle for the People's Front against fascist Japanese Imperialism has roused dozens of millions, in a way scarcely credible after the bloody suppression of the first wave of national and social revolution by the Chiang Kai-Shek Government (1927) and its subsequent repeated surrenders to the Japanese.[1] In one country after another of Latin America—Peru, Chile, Argentina—in face of the cruellest persecution, the oppressed Indian masses, the workers and peasants of Spanish descent, the democrat intellectuals have been brought into one fighting front for the first time against the century-old terrorism of military dictators. And in Spain the struggle passed on to the highest stage of all—open civil war and foreign intervention, against a people organised around a government of the People's Front, with a closer and closer unity of the working class as its steel core.

These features, it might be thought, stare one in the face, when one looks back over the twenty months since the historic Seventh Congress of the Communist International, at which Dimitrov proposed the watch-word of the People's Front. Aggressive action by the mass of the people against their enemies, on an unprecedented scale: substantial progress towards real unity of the working class, in both trade union and party

[1]The Japanese Government recently (January 14) prohibited, under severe penalty, the use of the words "People's Front."

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spheres: extension of the struggle against Fascism from the streets, the factories, the ballot box, to the battlefield itself, with the anti-Fascist forces organised as a Government: fiercer fighting, but on a higher plane than ever before, and therefore nearer to victory—who could fail to see these new features of the world situation, these characteristics of the new wave of wars and revolutions, bound up with the wider and wider acceptance of a People's Front against fascism?

Certainly no Socialist, thinks the reader. But he is wrong. Some members of the Independent Labour Party see no such thing. They see only "class collaboration," "political Mond-Turnerism," "alliance with the democratic elements of capitalism." On these grounds, they oppose the fight for a People's Front, setting up *against it* the idea of a united front of the workers, as zealously as they used to reject the Communist proposals for a united front of the workers against class collaboration, Mond-Turnerism and alliance with capitalism ten years ago (1925-27), when Fascism was not the international menace that it is to-day. At this rate, we must not despair of these comrades: they, too, will come forward with the slogan of the People's Front one day—when the situation requires something more.

But let us leave that to the future. To-day, things are bad enough. The Fascist rebellion, we learn with stupefaction, was "the logical sequence of the whole development of the People's Front Government."[2] As a result of the People's Front policy, it appears,[3] "(*a*) the Fascists were enabled to stage their revolt after their apparent defeat, and (*b*) the military resistance to Fascism was weakened, in contrast to the workers' success through the United Front, as in Catalonia." Naturally, "the People's Front Government had to give way, in the first weeks of the war, to a mainly Socialist Government."[4] And if the Spanish workers since then have been able to put up a splendid resistance to the Fascists, this is due not to the People's Front, but to the United Front.[5]

There are deep theoretical reasons for all this. "A position of *dual power* exists. The parallel with the Russian situation" (during the rule of Kerensky in the autumn of 1917) "is perfect, with this exception, indeed a decisive exception—that the Bolsheviks in Russia rejected the strategy of the People's Front, lock, stock and barrel; whereas in Spain, the C.P. and S.P. are asking the workers to maintain the People's Front. . . . . Substitute Azana for Kerensky, Franco for Kornilov, and Cortes for the Duma"[6] (and Jack Huntz and his friends for Lenin). And in

[2] Jack Huntz: *Spotlight on Spain* (published by the London Divisional Council I.L.P., September, 1936), p. 7.

[3] Jack Huntz: article in November *Controversy*, 1936.

[4] R.S. in *New Leader*, December 4, 1936.

[5] Jack Huntz: *Spotlight on Spain*, p. 10.

[6] Jack Huntz: op. cit., pp. 15, 16, 17.

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such a situation, if you please, Largo Caballero's Government refuses to " break now with the past tactics of coalition with the Liberals and adopt the independent working-class programme "—although this advice was given then, not only by Jack Huntz, but by that august body, the " international secretariat for the Fourth International."[7]

Here let us say in parenthesis that the voice in all these quotations is the voice of members of the I.L.P., but the words are those of the Trotskyists from whose writings they have been borrowed.

The fact is that an elementary principle of Marxism has been forgotten, and the *New Leader* had to come forward to disinter it.[8] " In historical fact, the capitalist democratic régime ended on the day that the workers' organisations were handed arms for their members, from the moment when the workers' militia was formed. How many Socialist authorities, from Marx onwards, have written that the character of a State is dependent upon the character of its armed forces ? "

How many, indeed ? And how many times did Marx write it ? But patience, all in good time. The thing to notice now is the truth beneath Communist and Socialist camouflage : that in Spain we have " a Workers' State constructing Socialism."[9] The peasants have the land, the workers have the factories, and they will not surrender them if Fascism is defeated. For " the struggle is not between democracy and Fascism, but between Socialism and Capitalism ":[10] " the alternative to a Fascist Spain is not a return to the Capitalist Liberal State which preceded the Fascist revolt. It is a Socialist Spain with workers' rule."[11] Here let us pause to take a breath.

Was there ever such a farrago of misrepresentation, confused thinking, bad history and sheer, plain, downright honest ignorance ? Are we given a single hint as to what alternative policy lay before the Communists and Socialists, on the morrow of the General Election of February, 1936, if they were not to honour the pact which had defeated the Fascist and Conservative candidates ? Not one solitary word. Is it denied that the Azana Government, formed with working-class support, ordered re-employment and compensation for those victimised after the 1934 struggle, released 30,000 political prisoners, restored Catalan autonomy and municipal self-government, legalised seizures of the land by 87,000 peasants, restored social services restricted by the reactionary government, and partly dissolved and disarmed the Fascist leagues ? No, none of these things are denied. Then how do critics justify their

[7]Manifesto reproduced by the *Temps*, August 21, 1936.

[8]Editorial, December 4, 1936.

[9]*New Leader*, December 4, although the reader may also refer to the *Daily Mail*, *Voelkischer Beobachter*, *Corriere della Sera*, and other authorities on " Marxism."

[10]Bob Edwards, in December *Controversy*.

[11]*New Leader*, November 27.

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sweeping assertions that the People's Front prepared the way for the Fascist revolt? By recounting all the weakness, wobbling and failures of the Azana Government—which were criticised sharply at the time by the Communists, particularly as regards disarmament of the Fascists, ruthless purification of the Army, and distribution of the land to the peasantry[12]—*and suppressing the obvious fact that, in face of the Fascist menace, no other course was possible for the working-class parties than to support the Left Republican Government.*

For the essential weakness of the People's Front at its early stages—and one which throws a particularly glaring light on the irresponsibility of lighthearted chatter about "dual power"—was the degree of disunity that still existed in the workers' ranks. Not only were they distributed among the various political parties constituting the united front—with the influential Anarchist leaders (contrary to Huntz' statement) issuing a call to abstain from voting on the very eve of the General Election—but the trade union movement itself was deeply split between the Red Unions, the General Union of Workers (U.G.T.) and the Anarcho-Syndicalist National Confederation of Labour (C.N.T.). The fusion of the Red Unions and the U.G.T.: the fusion of Communist and Socialist Youth organisations: the decision of the C.N.T. Congress to conclude an alliance with the U.G.T., were *all the product of the five months' respite which the People's Front won for the Spanish masses before the Fascists had gathered their forces for the rebellion.* The further advances towards proletarian unity—the working agreement of C.N.T. and U.G.T., Communists, Socialists and (for the first time in history) Anarchists: the fusion of the Socialist and Communist Parties in Catalonia: the first tentative steps towards trade union unity (fusion of C.N.T. and U.G.T. unions in Malaga province: regional alliance of the two organisations in Madrid, etc.): and the opening of negotiations for Socialist-Communist unity for all Spain—all came after the Civil War began.

It is impossible that some at any rate of the "left" critics should not, at some time or other, have read some of the works of Lenin to whom they nowadays refer so affectionately. How they square these obvious facts with their chatter about Kerensky, Kornilov and Azana is one of the world's greatest mysteries.

But it is not only the position in the working-class camp that makes the talk about "dual power" and the parallel with Russia under Kerensky utter nonsense. What class forces backed Kerensky when he came into office? The big Russian manufacturers, bankers and merchants, with

[12]Jack Huntz, op. cit., makes the amazing assertion that the Communists "failed to issue the slogan of giving the land to the peasants"—when not only did the People's Front bloc all but come to grief on this issue just before the elections, but scarcely any public statement of the C.P. but repeated the demand and showed how to get it.

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most of the landowners: and, behind them, British and French imperialism. On whose side were these forces in Spain? On the side of Gil Robles and Calvo Sotelo, and now of Franco. Why was there "dual power" in Russia? Because the petty bourgeois leaders of the proletariat and peasantry—the classes which had overthrown Tsardom, and were organised in a machine of irresistible power, the Soviets—persuaded them to abstain from taking full political power into their own hands, and to leave it in the hands of the representatives of finance-capital. It was this long self-stultification which opened the way for Kornilov, the would-be dictator. But where were the Soviets (or their equivalent all-embracing organisations of proletariat and peasantry) in Spain? Who was the representative of finance-capital to whom the workers and peasants voluntarily yielded power? Azana? But that is nonsense: it was the deadly enemies of Azana, i.e., of the People's Front Government who represented finance-capital, and who represent it to-day.

The fact is that J. Huntz and his friends, in their anxiety to drag in some scrap of "Marxism" by the hair of its head, in order to justify their utter confusion as to the nature of the People's Front, have mixed up a government of finance-capital with a government created by an alliance of the workers, peasants and town middle-class for the purpose of fighting finance-capital. It is true that neither of them is the dictatorship of the proletariat: but the "resemblance" ends there. If Jack Huntz is really so anxious to draw on Lenin's theory in order to discover what the People's Front may mean in Spanish conditions, he might do worse than study Lenin's ideas on another subject—the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, which is "also" not the dictatorship of the proletariat.[13]

But in Spain, we learn from the *New Leader*, that is just what we have got: "a Workers' State constructing Socialism." At least, that is what it thought on December 4. By December 18 it was not so sure, and Fenner Brockway wrote that there is an interregnum "between bourgeois economy which has disappeared and to-morrow's Socialist economy." The unavoidable realities, however, are even harsher. First and most elementary, the nationalisation or State requisitioning of industry for war purposes is not necessarily equivalent to the expropriation of the capitalist class. Secondly and fundamental for Spain, the peasants in only one section of Spain have taken the land—that section controlled by the Government. Thirdly, the Government of Republican Spain, and even of Catalonia, is not a government of the proletariat, but a government of the People's Front ("a mainly Socialist Government,"

[13]See also Dimitrov: *The Working Class Against Fascism* (reply to discussion at VII Congress).

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as the I.L.P. leaders say themselves).[14] To talk of bourgeois economy having " disappeared " is just balderdash.

It is probably with that in mind that the *New Leader* has produced another proof that a Workers' State has been created in Spain behind the " camouflage " of the People's Front—that mentioned already, about the Socialist authorities who have written that " the character of a State is dependent upon the character of its armed forces," and about the end of the " capitalist democratic " (or " capitalist liberal ") State. It would be most instructive and illuminating if the leader-writer were not to grudge a little time and space to tell us exactly where Marx, or any " Socialist authorities " after him, wrote anything so remarkable as that attributed to them. Engels wrote, and Lenin quoted with approval (*The State and Revolution*, ch. iv., and *The Proletarian Revolution and Kautsky the Renegade*, ch. iv.): " The State is nothing more than an apparatus for the oppression of one class by another." From this it would follow—and commonsense should suggest to the " left " critics where their ignorance of Marxism misleads them—that the character of a State is dependent, first and foremost, upon the class controlling it, which constructs its apparatus of oppression—including the armed forces—according to its requirements. And that is precisely why (in spite of Trotskyist propaganda to the contrary) the Republic controlled by the People's Front—the anti-fascist bloc of the workers, peasants, middle class and all democratic forces of the people—builds its armed forces, not as a Red Army, but as a People's Republican Army.

Obviously, when the Fascist rebellion has been crushed, and with it the power of Spanish finance-capital, Spanish democracy—led by a

[14] A perfect torrent of political hocus-pocus has been emitted, by the way, both in official I.L.P. publications and in Trotskyist sheets, on the subject of the composition of the Spanish Republican Governments. After weeks of declarations that in Catalonia there is a " Workers' Government," and adjuring Caballero to " break with the Liberals," Fenner Brockway admitted (*New Leader*) December 25, that the Catalonian Government has a workers' *majority*, with a minority of Republicans, representing the town middle-class and some sections of the peasantry, and one minister representing the mass of poor peasantry. Actually, the *first* new Catalan government after the rebellion began (July 31) had 11 Republicans, 3 Socialists, and 1 Peasant. But, owing to C.N.T. opposition, the Socialists and Peasant had to resign five days later, and for nearly two months Catalonia was under a Government of the People's Front manned by Left Republicans. The *second* (September 25) had 6 labour (3 C.N.T., 2 Unified Socialists, 1 P.O.U.M.), 1 Peasant, and 5 Republicans. The *third* (December 17) had 7 workers (4 C.N.T., 3 U.G.T.), 1 Peasant, and 3 Republicans. Now compare this with the experience in Spain as a whole. The all-Republican government here lasted only to September 4, when the first Caballero Cabinet was formed of 8 workers' ministers (6 Socialists, 2 Communists) and 5 middle-class (3 Republicans, 1 Catalan Republican, 1 Basque). The C.N.T. were offered membership, but refused.

On November 4 was formed the second Caballero Cabinet—6 Socialists, 4 Anarcho Syndicalists (C.N.T.), 2 Communists, with 6 middle-class (4 Republicans, 1 Basque, 1 Left Catalan). These are the facts about the " difference " between Catalonia and Spain. And yet the *New Leader* goes on writing about the need for Caballero to " break with the Liberals " and follow the example of Catalonia. In reality, the Catalonian workers are quite as intelligent as those of the rest of Spain, and have no intention of breaking up the People's Front by pushing away the town middle-class into the arms of Fascism to please Trotskyists—and Franco.

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working-class industrially and politically, we hope, united—will enter upon a new path, previously perhaps untrodden, and destined in any case to add new experience of the greatest value to the history of Socialism. Obviously, also, it will not rebuild the capitalist system. But from that to jump to the conclusion, as some would-be " lefts " do, that Spain is a " Workers' State," is mistaking their wishes for reality—or, in less polite English, political irresponsibility.

But that is not to be wondered at, when at the very basis of the continual attacks on the Anti-fascist People's Front lies utter inability to understand that it is the very flesh and blood of the united front of the working class. It represents the alliance of the proletariat with, and its leadership of, the mass of the people in a form adapted to the particular conditions of various countries, and above all, to the struggle against fascism—the most savage, the most loathsome, the most degrading but also the most dangerous of all forms of capitalist dictatorship : and therefore most hateful to the widest sections of the people.

Those who make these constant attempts to set up the united front in contrast with, or in opposition to, the People's anti-fascist Front, show most clearly how distant they still are from the Marx and Lenin to whom they are nowadays so fond of appealing. They fall under the head of the people described by Dimitrov at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, who

> . . . fail to understand that the united proletarian front and the anti-fascist people's front are inter-connected and interwoven, the one passing into the other in the process of the practical struggle against fascism as a consequence of the living dialectics of the struggle, and that there is certainly no Chinese wall to keep them apart. For it cannot be seriously supposed that it is possible to establish a genuine anti-fascist people's front without securing the unity of action of the working class itself, the *guiding force* of this anti-fascist people's front. At the same time, the further development of the united proletarian front depends, to a considerable degree, upon its transformation into a people's front against fascism.

Still, we should not be surprised at such vagaries from people who have proclaimed the P.O.U.M. (the " Workers' Party of Marxist Unity," as it calls itself with grandiloquence equalling its insincerity) to be their " Spanish Brother Party," and indeed to be " the I.L.P. of Spain." Rather we should express our gratitude that, in spite of this, they boggle at carrying P.O.U.M. methods and principles into Great Britain, and still encourage hundreds of honest and courageous workers who follow the I.L.P. to play an active part in united working-class struggles. For when we get away from all the fantastic advertising in the I.L.P. press to the effect that " the whole of political leadership in Catalonia lies with the P.O.U.M. . . . . the P.O.U.M. has become a mass organisation

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. . . . it was the members of the P.O.U.M. and the C.N.T. who saved Catalonia," and similar extravagancies—what is the P.O.U.M. ?

The P.O.U.M. is a party which welcomed a lunatic scheme involving " the *compulsory* adhesion of all agriculturists who exploit medium or small farms " to collective undertakings under Peasant Syndicates[15] and explaining that to let the peasants divide the land among themselves " would make the organisation of the society of the future even more difficult," and that the scheme " looks as though it will meet with no serious opposition."[16] It shows equal contempt for the problems of the vast peasant majority in Spain when it declared : " It is only a workers' government which to-day can achieve the new social order " (radio talk by A. Nin, who was P.O.U.M. representative for a short time in the Catalan cabinet, and did not mention the peasantry once in this talk, an exposition of his programme as Minister of Justice).

The P.O.U.M. likewise proclaimed its support of a unified military command and a more effective army : but declared at the same time that soldiers in any but a Red Army would be like " headless automatons who so efficiently click their heels and do and die for Hitler and Mussolini." Their ideal are soldiers who " are the autonomous heroes of the proletarian revolution," and their watchword in military organisation :[17] " Iron discipline at the front, and committees of workers and peasants behind the lines." Preaching, in fact, anarchy at the front and command by committees in the rear, it is not surprising that the P.O.U.M. denounced the Communist proposals to concentrate in the Republican general staff (whose orders " must be obeyed without discussion ") " the best and ablest soldiers and the best representatives of the parties and trade union organisations who enjoy the confidence of the masses," and to give to the army commanders, both tried civilians and loyal soldiers, who can command " absolute obedience to orders."[18] The P.O.U.M. declared this was " the handing over of the absolute control of the Workers' Army to professional militarists."[19]

With these highly " Marxist " views on fundamental problems of the revolution go such equally profound remarks as : " It is not necessary to recreate the army of the State, the tool of government "[20]—and less profound but no less counter-revolutionary activities, such as the incitement of women to organise food riots against the responsible minister

[15] McNair : *In Spain Now* (I.L.P., September, 1936,) p. 11.

[16] *The Spanish Revolution*, bulletin of the P.O.U.M. (Barcelona, October 28, 1936). Later, when this deliberate attempt to antagonise the peasantry from the workers was unmasked, the P.O.U.M. passed a resolution nominally abandoning the policy of compulsory collectivisation.

[17] *The Spanish Revolution.*

[18] Manifesto of the Communist Party of Spain (*Inprecorr*, January 9, 1937).

[19] *New Leader*, December 25, 1936.

[20] *The Spanish Revolution*, October 28, 1936.

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(who happens to be the secretary of the Unified Socialist Party), when recently there was a food shortage owing to the very profusion of autonomous committees in the country districts which the P.O.U.M. supports.

It is no exaggeration to speak of the P.O.U.M. as one of the most valuable propaganda agencies the Nazis possess behind the Republican lines. Their " testimony " as to the character of the Spanish Republic " beneath Communist camouflage " has already been mentioned. On December 9 we find their organ writing that " not even the Fascist states " desire war, but that they have " no other way " out of their present difficulties—and the workers of *every country* (including the U.S.S.R.) are urged, should the Fascist states begin a war, to " unloose the revolution."

The counter-revolutionary Trotskyist character of the P.O.U.M. reveals itself particularly clearly in its vile attacks on the U.S.S.R., whose ungrudging assistance to the Spanish people, in spite of extreme difficulties, has won recognition and admiration from millions of people all over the world. " Stalinist bureaucracy," which has " undermined the proletarian state," " a stunt of Stalinist publicity " (this in reference to the arrival of a supply ship !),[21] " the Spanish working class, whom Stalin would like to see subjected to his control "[22]—this is the common language in which the P.O.U.M. refers to the Soviet Union and its leaders. It invents a perfectly monstrous slander on the Red Army, describing it in its early days as " some undisciplined and chaotic militia . . . . in which many traitors were mingled," and who had to be sent into battle with a row of machine guns behind each unit, " manned by trusted Communists." It had the impudence to make the lying assertion that the Soviet Government " influenced the French Government " to remain neutral, and was " the only obstacle " in the way of Blum's changing his policy of non-intervention !

The P.O.U.M. itself does not attempt to conceal its anti-Soviet policy. Thus, its organ frankly admits (*The Socialist Revolution*, December 9), that it wrote in its paper in Madrid that the Soviet Embassy at Valencia and Soviet Consulate at Barcelona were inspiring and directing the propaganda of the Communists and Socialists against themselves. Needless to say, the P.O.U.M. are zealous champions of the old " Bolshevik Guard," tried in Moscow for treason, murder and espionage, and of the right of " Comrade Trotsky " to come to Catalonia. (Ibid.)

We note that Fenner Brockway, in a moment of irritation no doubt, has recorded his opinion that " the Trotskyists are everywhere a source of mischief in the working-class movement,"[23] and has tried to explain

[21] *Ibid.*
[22] *New Leader*, January 1, 1937.
[23] *New Leader*, December 4, 1936.

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away the treacherous and provocative activities of the P.O.U.M. by the naïve theory that the Trotskyists seized leading posts in the organisation while the leader was away for a few weeks ! But the P.O.U.M. distinguished itself as an *agent provocateur* and wrecking organisation both before and after the absence of Mr. Gorkin. And it is worth noting that, at a recent district conference of the P.O.U.M. itself at Castellon, at the end of January, the delegates from Valencia and the Teruel front fiercely criticised the anti-Soviet propaganda of the P.O.U.M., which the leaders promised to amend. Their party sheet, the " Batalla," did not print any account of this !

But, in spite of all the slanders and confusion spread by the Trotskyists and their dupes, the People's Front is firmer in Spain to-day than ever. And if the heroic people of Spain are step by step struggling forward to victory, amidst colossal difficulties, at the price of precious lives in tens of thousands, in the teeth of brutally open intervention by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, stealthily aided by the pharisaical National Government—that progress is due above all to the policy of that " broad people's anti-fascist front on the basis of the proletarian united front," which Dimitrov at the Seventh Congress declared was closely connected with the success of the proletarian struggle itself. To-day, he can write, and the Executive Committee of the Communist International can confirm,[24] that its victory " will decisively undermine the material political basis of Fascism in Spain, and lead to further consolidation of the democratic forces in France, England and other countries "—with immense consequences for the world at large. And no thinking worker or Socialist will say him nay.

[24]Article and resolution in *Inprecorr*, January 9, 1937.

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THE TROTSKYIST TRIAL

By R. PAGE ARNOT[1]

EVERYONE has heard of General Franco's "Fifth Column." Everyone who reads the war dispatches from Spain knows of these fascist groups behind the lines of the Spanish Government, placed there in order to do as much damage as they could. When the forces of the Spanish rebels, in their four different columns, were threatening Madrid, Franco boasted that inside Madrid, within the Government lines, he had a "Fifth Column" consisting of the Phalange Espanole, sons of landlords and high officials, fascists of various organisations who set themselves there to carry out wrecking, espionage, spreading of panic.

But nobody had thought about a "Fifth Column" of Fascism operating or seeking to operate inside the Soviet Union. Yet this, in essence, was the charge against Pyatakov, Radek, Sokolnikov, Serebriakov, and all their associates.

In the Soviet Union, groups, under the direction of Leon Trotsky (and hence, called "Trotskyists"), having no possible basis of support in the masses of the people, used their positions to prepare similar deeds of terror and treason, and some they actually carried out, operating as a "Fifth Column" of Fascism. Fortunately, they were caught in time. Their trial and condemnation in January, 1937, not only revealed criminal deeds and a foul record reaching back for many years, but also exposed the war plans of the Fascist powers, with the Trotskyist groups as their willing tools and weapons.

It is this which makes this trial of international significance. It is no story of far-off things, but an eye-opener to all in Britain of the danger that is at our doors.

The examination of the prisoners on their depositions, the evidence of witnesses and of experts, together with the documentary proofs and exhibits, revealed the following: A conspiracy amongst former Trotskyists had taken definite shape in 1933, with the formation, at the instruction of Trotsky, of an underground parallel anti-Soviet Centre. It was "parallel" to the already existing "United Trotsky-Zinoviev Centre," composed of Kamenev, Zinoviev, Smirnov, etc., who were sentenced in the August, 1936, trial. The "parallel centre" had as its members Pyatakov, Radek, Sokolnikov, and Serebriakov.

[1]This article consists of passages from a forthcoming pamphlet by the author.

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Their *object* was the overthrow of the Soviet power.

Their *methods* were wrecking, spying and terrorism, with the purpose of undermining the military and economic strength of the U.S.S.R.

Their *perspective* was the defeat of the Soviet Union in war, which they endeavoured to hasten and to prepare for by the above methods.

Their *allies* to bring them to power were to be Fascist Germany and Japan, with whose representatives Trotsky, Radek and Sokolnikov negotiated.

The *price* to be paid to the allies, after the defeat of the U.S.S.R. was :

(1) Cession of the Ukraine (the second most populous republic of the U.S.S.R.) to Germany, and the two Far East provinces of the R.S.F.S.R. to Japan ;

(2) Economic and political concessions to capitalists, together with the liquidation of collective farms and restoration of capitalism in what remained of Soviet territory ;

(3) Support of Hitler's policy in the Balkans and on the Danube.

Treason, spying, wrecking and terrorism were the catalogue heading of these criminal activities, extending over a period of years, involving frightful destruction and loss of human life, carried through in connection with the Nazi Gestapo and the Japanese Intelligence Service—and now, revealed in open court.

As the trial proceeded, there arrived in Moscow the British press accounts and comments. It was astounding. We, who were sitting there in the court every day, seeing, listening, taking full notes, learned that the case had already been judged by the British press. The editors prompted no doubt by their millionaire owners, needed no evidence to enable them to make up their minds. They knew beforehand what to say. And, without much ado, they found the Soviet Union guilty ; and hastened to acquit all the criminals.

Now, it must be remembered that, while a trial is proceeding in Britain, newspapers, under heavy penalties, are forbidden to comment. If we may judge by this trial, this rule would appear to be a good rule. For as a whole, the British press proved itself quite incapable of any fair-mindedness, of any notion of what constitutes evidence, of any appreciation of what issues were raised by this trial, and any grasp of how serious could be the international effects of their loose-tongued railing, and revelling in their prejudices. When the late Graham Wallas began his book, written nearly twenty-five years ago, with the words " If the war between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, which so many of *our journalists contemplate with criminal levity*, were to break out . . . ." he was speaking only too truly. The same " criminal levity " is still their characteristic.

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In short, if anything were wanted to prove that Lenin was right when he spoke of the boasted liberty of the press as meaning the liberty of the rich to dope and deceive the masses of the people, then their behaviour over the Moscow trials would finish that proof.

But amongst all the press, the one which caused astonishment (for we all know the obscene monkey-house of the Rothermere and Beaverbrook press), and aroused the most disgust was the behaviour of the *Manchester Guardian*. This one-time Liberal organ, with its parade of humanitarian feelings, had no word to say for the miners murdered at Kemerovo, the children who had been killed by the dynamite that Shestov had cached, or the Red Army men done to death by the train-wreckers of the Trans-Siberian.

In the past, when other papers have winked at terrorism (terrorism abroad, be it understood), the *Manchester Guardian* has indignantly protested ; but now the *Manchester Guardian* defended the terrorists, passionately defended this set of cold-blooded scoundrels. All their polished manners vanished of a sudden ; and instead, a stream of venomous libels, innuendoes and lies was poured out against the leaders of the U.S.S.R. and, by implication, against the Soviet workers and peasants.

What is the explanation ? It is not a particular bizarre outburst of romantic liberalism, defending " the man in the dock." The explanation is that on the staff of the *Manchester Guardian* there is a Trotskyist, and to his tender care the old newspaper of C. P. Scott entrusted its reputation. The result was this wild campaign of abuse, this summoning of messages from Trotsky, this ludicrous parade of " Marxist " authority, this reckless lying about the Soviet Union and the history of the Bolsheviks. For it is not quite normal in the *Manchester Guardian*, to whatever knowledge they may pretend, for its writers to imagine they can decide that X is a Marxist and Y is not : this is something about which the normal Guardianist would preen himself on his ignorance. Nor is it normal to find such reckless statements apropos of Radek as that " the Polish Communists were an élite in the Russian revolutionary movement and have suffered heavy casualties under the Stalinist persecution." (There is no such élite in the sense implied : they have not " suffered heavy casualties " : there is no " Stalinist persecution."[2]

[2]Nor is Radek to be classed primarily amongst Polish Communists, for, although born in Galicia and participating for a short time in the movement, in Poland, by far the greatest part of his activity before 1917 was with the German Left Social-Democrats. Of Polish Communists in the Soviet Union, the best-known have been Dzerzhinsky (the outstanding figure) ; Unschlicht (Secretary of the Tsik Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets) ; Makulevitch (now the chief of aviation) ; and Menshinsky. Dzerzhinsky's last speech before his death in 1926 was a bitter reproach to the Trotskyists, especially to Kamenev, for their sabotage of the building of Socialism by their intrigues.
Altogether, rather an easily detected forgery by the *Manchester Guardian* Trotskyist. At one time the Trotskyists complained that the condemnation of their errors was a sign of anti-Semitism. Now, apparently, the condemnation of their crimes is to be presented as " the assault on the Polish Virgin," with Radek in the title rôle.

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It only took a few days of this stuff to wreck whatever reputation had remained to the paper of C. P. Scott.

But then, if you hand over your ship to be navigated by a wrecker, you must not be surprised if he runs you on the rocks.

I was glad to know that the *Daily Worker*, which was the only paper to give a full connected account of the trial, exposed the " Manchester Trotskyist " (as I suppose we must now call it) and the space to the *ex parte* cables from Mexico, and denied to the evidence that was available. (The *Daily Herald* also had its guns silenced by the *Daily Worker*.)

But apart from the *Daily Worker* and the *amende honorable* of Mr. A. J. Cummings in the *News-Chronicle*, there was little in the British press but a travesty of the facts. It was this, more than anything, that made me write these lines in the hope that readers of them will go to the verbatim report of the trial, learn there of how they were misled by the newspapers ; and learn also how dangerous is the position of democracy in Britain, how dangerous the chance of peace, when their defence —which must be based on truth and accuracy—is left to such journals as these.

Mr. Emrys Hughes (in the Glasgow *Forward*) under the heading " Mystery of the Moscow Trials " (note the showman's trick in the use of the word " mystery " which, least of all, can apply to this due process of Soviet Law, carried out in the fullest publicity), and the sub-heading, " The Alleged Conspiracy," says :

> Outside Russia few people will accept the " confessions " of Radek, Sokolnikov, Pyatakov and the others as proof of a gigantic conspiracy to overthrow the Soviet Government and establish Fascism in Russia. That all these old revolutionaries should have taken part in such a melodrama is incredible.

Why is it incredible ? Mr. Hughes, from his pinnacle of incredulity vouchsafes no reason. Like the sceptical sailor confronted with an elephant, he says simply, " There ain't no such animal." But we may, perhaps, glean from his sentence, first, a hazy notion that " old revolutionaries " never become counter-revolutionaries : and that further, in speaking of the " old revolutionaries," he is casting around them a halo of martyrdom (for, when he says a little later, " Can it be that of the old revolutionaries, Stalin was the only honest man among them ? " it is clearly equivalent to the capitalist press legend of the " Leninist Old Guard.")

Why should Mr. Hughes, who can write learnedly enough when he chooses, suddenly forget all about the history of the French Revolution, of the American Revolution, of the English Revolution in the 17th century ? What of Mirabeau, boosted by Thomas Carlyle, afterwards proved to have taken money from the Court of Louis XVI. ? What of the whole

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series of figures of the French Revolution, who, beginning on the side of the people, crossed over to counter-revolution, and intrigued with foreign powers against revolutionary France? What of the infamous Fouché? What of the notorious figure of Benedict Arnold in the American Revolution? What of Sir Thomas Wentworth, the unbending puritan who, as the Earl of Strafford, became chief agent of the tyranny under Charles I? What of those figures of the English revolutionaries who were willing to plot with the monarchists and with foreign powers against Cromwell, against whom assassinations, plot after plot, were launched?

Even in what the Whigs called the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the pages of its history show example after example of men who were speaking with their tongue in their cheek (yes, Mr. Hughes, just like you, "Radek writing with his tongue in his cheek"), taking money from the Grand Monarque and from the Pretender while they held high posts under William of Orange. What better example is there than that of the famous John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, who sold James II. to William of Orange, betrayed William of Orange, intrigued with the Old Pretender, and with George I.?

Or come a little nearer to the present day: and consider how Mussolini in Italy, Pilsudski in Poland, MacDonald in Great Britain, all figures of the Socialist International, one after another crossed to the side of the capitalists. Mussolini was one of the fieriest orators of the Socialist Party of Italy. Even when he was being expelled from that party, he defended himself in a speech, saying he would remain a socialist and revolutionary up to the very end on the workers' side of the barracks, etc., etc. Now, this man is responsible for the tyrannies in Italy, the rape of Abyssinia, and intervention in Spain. Is it not incredible? Yet it has taken place.

Joseph Pilsudski (one of the "élite" of the Polish revolutionaries) member of the underground conspirative organisations against Tzardom; also, like Mussolini, revolutionary; also, like Mussolini, head of a semi-fascist, or more than semi-fascist state, under which the freedom of the workers is repressed and incredible pogroms carried out in Western Ukraine. But still more incredible is it that these things should be done by Pilsudski, and yet, there are not two Pilsudskis, but one man who underwent this metamorphosis.

Ramsay MacDonald was at one time a man in whom scores of thousands of British workers placed their trust as a leader who would guide them into a promised land of Socialism. When the first Labour Government was formed, hearts beat high with hope. And now? Is it not incredible? Yet it has taken place. When the Communists warned the workers ten years, fifteen years ago against MacDonald, it was you, in the *Forward*

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who rejected the picture of the future development of MacDonald as "incredible." Yet it has taken place.[3] Or, to take other names prominent in recent times, who have had the same views as Mr. Hughes, what of Hodges, Spencer and Thomas—all anti-Soviet, anti-Communist, betrayers of the Labour Movement.

As early as 1914, Lenin pointed out that Mussolini was a "traitor" to the working-class movement. In 1919, Lenin dealt with MacDonald whom he characterised an article of his as

> The best example that could be given of that smooth, melodious, banal and socialist-seeming phraseology which serves in all developed capitalist countries to camouflage the policy of the bourgeoisie inside the Labour Movement. (From the article "Ramsay Macdonald and the Third International," by N. Lenin, LABOUR MONTHLY, Vol. 6, pp. 140-157, March, 1924.)

MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas are only typical of a process that has been, unfortunately, too common in the history of the working-class movement, a process of betrayal, of crossing to the side of counter-revolution. And if these last could never at anytime be considered revolutionaries, the process goes on only the more swiftly and rushes to further extremes of treachery, when it takes place as part of a developing revolution.

The great revolution of our times (and indeed, of all time), the Russian Revolution, has its history strewn with the figures of those who passed from revolution to counter-revolution. There were men prominent enough in the revolutionary movement thirty-five years ago, and who, even before the war, had become open counter-revolutionaries; others who ratted during the war; others who joined the White Guards of Kolchak and Denikin in the effort to crush the first Workers' Republic; and lastly, these others who, like all their predecessors, rolled down into the mire of counter-revolution.

It is clear that, when it suits his purpose, the reminiscent Mr. Hughes' memory of these things can turn into a remarkable "forgettory." And this organ of Mr. Hughes is also hard at work when he endeavours, in his hazy way, to present the accused as the "Leninist Old Guard." The facts of history, however, strip from the Trotskyists the halo bestowed on them by Lord Rothermere and Mr. Hughes. For amongst these prominent conspirators of these last years in the U.S.S.R., there is not one who did not fight against Lenin, not one who could be counted as an "Old Guard" (if this phrase has to be used) in the sense of consistent revolutionary supporters of Lenin's struggle. From 1903 to 1923,

[3]Here, we may note that, in the case of each of these three men, Lenin, much earlier, had already given warning to the workers as to their quality. While they were still being regarded as socialists and revolutionaries, Lenin was able to detect in the earlier Joseph Pilsudski the features that developed in the later Joseph Pilsudski.

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against Lenin and the majority of the Central Committee ; from 1923 to 1937, against Stalin and the majority of the Central Committee, one or other of these men were carrying on an open or concealed struggle.

The facts cannot be concealed. Trotsky was *the bitterest* opponent of Lenin and of the Bolsheviks in the whole period of 1903 to 1917 ; and after he joined the Bolshevik Party, in the summer of 1917, not a year had passed before he renewed the struggle, this time, within its ranks. In 1921, Lenin, after Trotsky had been defeated in this recurring struggle, proposed and carried at the Congress of the Bolshevik Party, a decision designed to prevent the disruptive factional tendencies of Trotsky and his like from recurring again. In 1923, Lenin was no sooner removed from activity, than Trotsky gathered his faction, this time in a permanent grouping of Trotskyists, a grouping which remained, with additions from various malcontents, all during the last ten years of struggle against the Bolshevik Party, once more outside its ranks.

The facts about the others are similar. Against Radek and Pyatakov, Lenin fought most trenchantly during the war ; and it was this group, along with Bucharin, who, in 1918, carried their bitter struggle against Lenin to the point of planning his removal and imprisonment. Hardly the actions of an " Old Guard ? "

The treachery of Zinoviev and Kamenev at the crucial moments of October-November, 1917, is well-known in itself as a fact against the Emrys Hughes-Rothermere legend. And so with the others, some of them " intriguers like Sokolnikov," as Lenin bitterly stigmatised the man our British newspapers last month announced to have been " a close friend of Lenin."

No, the forgery of a " Leninist Old Guard " will not pass. It can only gain a temporary currency in countries where the fables of the capitalist press are so easily swallowed by " socialists " such as Mr. Hughes.

Twenty-five years ago, after the famous Prague Conference of the Bolsheviks, the destinies of the united party were directed by a small Central Committee ; out of that dozen, Malinoksky paid the penalty for treachery in 1917, and Zinoviev last year. Of the remainder, Lenin, Sverdlov, Ordjonikidze and others have died in the course of nature. Stalin, Kalinin (chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets), Bubnov (Commissar of Education), Stassova (member of C.E.C.), still remain leading the Party, the Soviet Government and the Soviet peoples.

Here then, if we have to use this phrase of a " Leninist Old Guard," would be the fitting personnel. If there are comrades who remained steadfast and true to Bolshevism, to the teachings of Lenin, who, led by Stalin, carried and are carrying them out, we can look for them in

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them and in succeeding personnel of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party and the C.E.C. of the Soviets.

All these are facts available to Mr. Hughes. Yet this *Forward* journalist, whose task it should be to give guidance and enlightenment to his readers, spurns the facts of history and adopts the legendary nonsense and misrepresentations of the capitalist press. But, instead of enlightenment he dully repeats " that all these old revolutionaries should have taken part in such a melodrama is incredible. . . . . Can it be that of the old revolutionaries, Stalin was the only honest man amongst them ? "

Mr. Hughes visited the Soviet Union five years ago, came back to praise the Russian Revolution then, and now to reveal that he never understood what a revolution is. A social revolution is a rising of a subject class, or classes, against a ruling class, an awakening to political life and activity of millions, hitherto passive, a liberation of human energy, passions, aspirations, to an unparalleled degree, a fiery furnace in which all substances must melt, a process that goes on gaining momentum, as new tasks, problems, difficulties draw out new reserves of unconquerable energy from the masses.

With each higher stage of the revolution there are men who cannot rise to the higher stage, who fight against the new developments, who, if they do not learn from their errors and correct their mistakes, very quickly become a brake on the wheels, become a counter-tendency to the historical sweep onwards of scores of millions, and finally, rush violently down the steep of counter-revolution.

Just as the vitality and energy of revolution is at an extremely high potential, so when once the grip on revolutionary reality is lost, the reverse process of these few reaches an extremity of degradation. As a revolution has and gives life abundant beyond ordinary measure, so counter-revolution sets in the process of putrefaction with appalling rapidity and foulness. This is the law of revolution that can be tested from every example in modern history.

All this, which should be known to a socialist writer in Mr. Hughes' position, he makes no effort to understand. Instead of *studying* this trial and its background, he repeats his " incredible " with all the assurance of a middle-class philistine (e.g., St. John Ervine), who has nothing to learn because he does not wish to learn, and with manners and " facts " picked up from the gutter of Fleet Street.

[*Owing to pressure of space the third instalment of the " Selected Letters " of V. I. Lenin has had to be held over till the April issue.*]

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BOOK REVIEWS

LIBERALISM AND COMMUNISM.

Forward from Liberalism. By Stephen Spender. A Left Book Club Choice. (V. Gollancz.) pp. 126. 7s. 6d.

THE importance of *Forward from Liberalism*, by Stephen Spender, lies in the fact that its author is not only a young intellectual whose family is one of the oldest Liberal families in the country, but also because he is representative of a wide section of the population whose approach to Communism we warmly welcome. At the same time it is most important that they should reach their final decisions as to where they stand with full clearness and complete understanding. It is all the harder for them to see clearly if their connections have been with those who have played an important rôle in British politics, a rôle always opposed to the vital interests of the working class.

The Spender influence as expressed through the *Westminster Gazette* in its heyday, took the form of the velvet glove so long as it was possible, and the iron hand, when situations compelled the Liberal capitalists "to put the workers in their place."

The Spender influence in politics was seen at work more recently in the Report of the Royal Commission on "The Private Manufacture and Trade in Arms." Many pacifists and other liberal minded people cherished the illusion that when Stephen Spender's uncle was made a member of this Commission, "something good might come out of it." They had forgotten that Liberalism is always Capitalism and where private profit is at stake, a good Liberal will always invoke the sacred doctrine of *laissez faire* rather than support state interference in the public interest.

It is therefore interesting to see how a young Spender attempts to shake off the shackles of the past, and tries in this epoch of capitalist decline and imperialist wars and proletarian revolutions to find his way to Communism. I say deliberately, tries to find his way, because I suspect from the way this book opens and finishes that Spender had in mind the title "Forward to Communism." But he is not yet a Communist, though he is seriously trying to become one.

There are tens of thousands of young men and women in Spender's position to-day. They are typical of the ferment that is going on inside the Public Schools and Universities. All the "classical education," all the attempts to perpetuate the ideologies of the Liberal and Tory parties, all the laboured efforts of learned professors and dons to preserve the sanctity of the capitalist system, cannot prevent the cracks from showing, cannot hide the crisis of capitalism ; cannot answer the earnest questionings of young people sent from middle-class homes.

These questions arise because in our lifetime, Britain has taken part in a world war, seen Fascism come to power in several European countries, and now confronts the youth with the menace of a new war which will wipe out the flower of the youth of the country.

It is obvious that Stephen Spender with his sensitive mind, has been strongly affected by all these new developments. The mistake is that he did not wait a little longer, get more practical experience before committing himself to print.

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Yet, his book, imperfect as it is, completely wrong in many important and fundamental aspects of Communist policy, particularly on issues affecting the Soviet Union, will undoubtedly help people in the position of the author himself. To many of Spender's own generation and to others also who came to political consciousness in the years of Liberal government before the war, these pages will recall their own mental journey. They will find their way lit by many flashes of insight, their own doubts and difficulties sympathetically met, if not always resolved, and they will travel with him along the road which leads away from Liberalism and in the direction of Communism.

I could not help thinking as I read this book of one of the early pamphlets I devoured with such eagerness as a boy: *Liberal and Tory Hypocrisy*, by Walter Glyde, of Bradford. This little penny pamphlet did more to convince the workers of the rottenness of both Liberalism and Toryism than most of the well-intentioned but pretentious volumes that have been written since. Such a pamphlet, however, could not have the same effect upon middle class and professional people. They would brush it aside with "intellectual" contempt, for it dealt with a world that it was easier to accept and with policies that it was much more comfortable to close ones eyes to.

Now the new political consciousness that is awakening in those circles demands that one of "their own" should try to answer the questions that life is now placing before them. It is a difficult job, and therefore those who attempt it should first of all make a deeper study of Marxism in order that they may find the key which will enable them to understand the real character of the problem they have to tackle.

First, it is necessary to drop this nonsense about Liberalism being something completely distinct from Toryism, and trying to deceive people about the lofty idealism of Liberalism in foreign policies. All the grand platitudes about Liberalism involving liberty and freedom for all peoples only hide the actual policy that it carried out. Its foreign policy always served the interests of British Imperialism. Liberalism used the phrases of liberty, it advocated the abolition of Chinese slavery in the South African mines, but it never advocated freedom for India which would have been in opposition to British capitalist interests.

I consider one of the greatest defects in Spender's book is that he appears to have been taken in by this. It would have enhanced the value of the book if its author had remembered the opposition of the Liberal Party to the first Factory Acts, to any of the demands of the workers for better conditions; if he had recalled Featherstone, Hull, Tonypandy, where the workers were fired on by the armed forces of a Liberal Government in great strike struggles; if he had remembered that in our Depressed Areas the ghastly housing conditions described in the *News Chronicle* by Ian Mackay are a damning indictment of Liberalism.

It is true that in the epoch of Liberalism, certain reforms were won by the mass struggles of the workers. The Liberal Ruling Class never gave anything that was not forced from them by the working class. Stephen Spender ignores these vital facts and presents a picture of a philanthropic and well-intentioned Liberal Ruling Class.

He admits that "Liberalism could not afford to damage many of the great interests behind it," although "a true Liberalism bound to these great interests is, in the long run, an impossibility"; he speaks of "the intolerable position of every reformist government within the capitalist state," which forces it to

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" choose between abandoning reforms and even the fundamental principle of peace, or challenging the whole capitalist and imperial system." But he naturally cherishes a certain weakness for the faith in which he was nourished, and he is inclined to regard liberal capitalism as the lesser evil and not as the reverse of the same old capitalist medal.

I believe that if Stephen Spender had paid more attention to this side of Liberalism his sensitive soul would have been sufficiently embittered to understand why, when a people have finally conquered power as in the Soviet Union, they will never again take any risks that can lead to a restoration of capitalism, why they will break with " rotten liberalism " in their politics, and when Trotskyite traitors are found, will deal with them as they deserve. In so doing they will not be unduly perturbed at pious expressions of " liberal horror," for many Soviet citizens have studied British industrial history, they know Marx's unforgettable description of the Lancashire workers' conditions, have read Engels' *Conditions of the Working Class*. The thousands of babies and children murdered for profit by our Liberal capitalists, the stunted physical growth of Glasgow and Lancashire workers in the heyday of Liberalism, these are burnt into our minds also, not only by books, but by bitter personal contact and experience. That is why the majority of the British workers have supported the Soviet Government in everything that it has done, and our intellectuals should take such facts as these into account before they raise their voices in protest against the uprooting of those who want to overthrow the Soviet Government.

Stephen Spender wrote this book many months ago. Since then some of his writings have shown that he is rapidly growing clearer on the political issues of our time. I firmly believe that if he had to write such a book now, it would take on a different form.

Forward from Liberalism, despite the ample room for serious criticism it provides, is of definite value. I have no doubt at all that many members of the Left Book Club who are not yet finally convinced about the bankruptcy of Liberalism and Toryism will find it both useful and helpful.

Undoubtedly it will create strong discussion and criticism within Left Book Club circles. And why not ? Socialists and Communists, members of the Club, have opportunities of explaining, expanding, and correcting those parts of the book which are undoubtedly in need of criticism. If they do this with the same intensity of purpose with which I know Stephen Spender wrote his book, they will really help to realise in practice his aim—to bring thousands away from Liberalism on the road to Communism.

HARRY POLLITT.

P.S.—Since this review was written Stephen Spender has joined the Communist Party, and replied to criticisms of his book in an article in the *Daily Worker*.—H.P.

LENIN " TRANSLATED."

The Letters of Lenin. Translated by Elizabeth Hill and Doris Mudie. (Chapman and Hall.) pp. 495. 15s. (Cheap Edition 5/- from Workers' Bookshop.)

READERS of recent issues of the LABOUR MONTHLY will have had some foretaste of the tremendous interest and importance of Lenin's correspondence, and will have realised the urgency of an authoritative, properly translated and edited collection of his letters in an English form. And doubtless

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they have been looking forward to the edition of "Letters of Lenin," which Chapman and Hall had announced for the autumn, but which has just been issued. It is unfortunate that this product is in many respects open to serious criticism.

Any translation of a work of historical and political importance must be judged from three aspects:

1. Its accuracy as a translation.

2. The evident political, historical and other requisite equipment of the translators and editors.

3. Its fidelity to the original in the minor but frequently important editorial details of punctuation, italics, brackets, etc.

In all three regards this volume is below all reasonable standards.

1. The translation is full of petty inaccuracies, and innumerable major errors. One letter of under two-and-a-half pages contains nearly a dozen translation errors, in addition to another dozen inaccuracies and omissions. Here are a few of them, taken from letter 155 on page 268.

Third line, page 268. "The same opinions" should be "something of the sort."

Page 268, third line from bottom. "On principle" should be "in essence."

Page 269, line 14. "Outside the faction" should be "outside faction publications."

Lines 21-2. ". . . . because of this opinion and they want to shut my mouth before I have had time to open it." This should read: "I know they are cursing me for this: he wants to shut other mouths before he has opened his own."

Line 3 from bottom. "Unite" should be "bind."

Page 270, line 3. "Attack" should be "fight."

Line 4. "Without obviously taking sides" should be "to one side, outside the faction publications." (N.B.: "fraction" is commonly used rather than "faction.")

Line 16. "It is, of course, rather difficult . . . ." This sentence should read: "Of course, it is difficult and painful to make this division among living (not 'strong') people."

And all the above are in one letter! Nor is this an isolated instance, for almost every letter the reviewer has been able to examine (and he has only the two volumes of political letters in the original Russian) contains similar mistakes. Let readers compare the letter numbered 37 in the January LABOUR MONTHLY with the text given on page 306 of this volume, and then accept the reviewer's assurance that the number of translation errors in the volume version of this letter is, if anything, below the average. Let them compare the sentence beginning, in the L.M. version: "To counteract this disintegration . . . ." with the corresponding sentence in the Chapman and Hall volume, and ask themselves whether they can make any sense out of the latter. Such uncomprehending and incomprehensible sentences occur again and again. On the basis of letters checked, in this book of 500 pages, there must be nearly 1,000 errors of translation alone.

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What of the political and historical scholarship of the translation? Here again, examination reveals that the translators can have only the most elementary knowledge of economics, politics, Russian history, etc. Here are some examples of their qualifications.

On page 89 the Russian for "surplus value" is translated as "additional cost," "productivity of labour" as "production of labour," and "cost" as "price."

In the summary on page 18 the "Economists" of the 1900's are described as "the Trade Union wing of Russian Marxism," which is just barmy, quite apart from the fact that Trade Unions were non-existent at that time.

On page 471 the Russian word "Maly" is left untranslated. Presumably the translators thought it was a place, and did not know of the existence of the "Little" or inner Council of People's Commissars.

On page 306 a translation error relating to elections could not have been made if the translators had had adequate knowledge of Russian history.

On page 264 an error in translation might have been avoided if the translators had had adequate knowledge of philosophy.

On pages 211-2 their ignorance of Social-Democratic Party history leads them to translate one word in two or three different ways, so confusing in the reader's mind the organisations responsible for the various decisions, etc.

Throughout the book the Russian for "trade union" is translated as "professional union."

On page 324 the Russian workers are declared to be "uniting in a Party way in all the legal societies, including insurance companies," (lucky dogs!) when mutual benefit societies are intended.

On page 359 the second figure of 75,000 should be 15,000. In the previous line the word "material" is a mistranslation of "literature," but as the translators evidently did not know of the section "Literature" at the end of Lenin's article on Marx, they apparently assumed that 15,000 was a misprint for 75,000—which it wasn't.

The letter on page 426, addressed to Ulianova from Stirsudden, has been misplaced, and should be dated not 1917, but 1907. An editor who knew her Russian history would not have let such a slip pass, for both the tone of the letter ("summer rest" for Lenin in June-July, 1917!) and the reference to the third Duma should have aroused her suspicions.

Most absurd of all is the treatment of superscriptions. Where Lenin simply says "Dear," as he usually does, the English version almost invariably uses "My dear," so giving a false emphasis to the relationships. Still worse is the translators' obsession by the words "Bolshevik" and "Menshevik." Knowing by heart that these mean "majority" and "minority" (which is not strictly true, for they are nouns of person *derived* from "majority" and "minority") they apparently assume that the contrary also holds good, and that the Russian words for "majority" and "minority" are always to be translated "Bolshevik" and "Menshevik." As a result, they commit the anachronism of making Lenin talk of "Bolsheviks" and "Mensheviks" before the words had come into use (letter 125) while on page 321 they make him say that the six Social-Democratic deputies elected to the Duma by the workers represent the Bolsheviks, when in fact he says that they represent the majority of the workers. No difference, of course!

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Editorial supervision of the text seems to have been completely lacking, not only in the larger aspects indicated above, but also in the smaller matters. Punctuation marks, brackets, etc., are frequently wrongly placed, with the effect sometimes of changing the meaning of a sentence. Italics are reproduced quite arbitrarily, dozens of important cases being omitted. Again and again quotation marks are omitted, with the result of attributing to Lenin remarks he was quoting from others. Again and again words and phrases, frequently important ones, are omitted. To attempt to cite evidence on these points is like taking two or three grains of sand from a seashore.

Nor can one discern much positive evidence of editorial activity. Certainly the array of footnotes looks imposing, but whose notes are they? Extensive check against originals has failed to reveal a single note which is not taken from the Russian editions. No attempt whatever has been made to supply notes enabling the English reader to orientate in certain difficult historical, organisational or polemical questions; the reader will look in vain, for instance, for a note explaining the method of elections to the Fourth Duma, without which certain letters written in 1912-13 are largely unintelligible. "Editorial insertions in the text are in square brackets," says the editor in a foreword (almost the only original contribution to the work), but she omits to explain that almost without exception these insertions are also drawn from the notes to the Russian editions. Would one deduce that, or what would one deduce, from the bald phrase as it stands?

And on page 228-229 the translators appear to have made a wild guess at the meaning of the initials S.R.D., taking them to stand for "Social Revolutionary Democrats." The summary goes on to say that this organisation publishes *Izvestia*, proclaims freedom of the press, introduces an eight-hour day, has Trotsky at its head, and finally is arrested *en bloc*. Long before this the reader acquainted with Russian history will have realised that S.R.D. stands not for some non-existent organisation of "Social Revolutionary Democrats," but for the Soviet of Workers' Deputies (Soviet Rabochikh Deputatov). "There's no fool like the foolhardy!" This same example provides further proof of the gross incompetence and carelessness of the people concerned, for in the sentence immediately preceding the one first mentioning this organisation of "Social Revolutionary Democrats" occurs the phrase: "Work of S.P.B. Council of Workers' Deputies." If the translators had used the historically correct word "Soviet" instead of "Council," they would probably have avoided the charge of inventing an organisation to fit the initials.

"Competent and scholarly" this volume has been called. That is a remarkable though unconscious tribute to the work of the Russian editors, which could not be obscured even by this extraordinary production. But what a pity that so much valuable work should have been so persistently maltreated, and above all else, what a pity that many of Lenin's most important letters should have been presented to English readers in such a disguise!

It is unfortunate that competent revision could not have taken place before the publication of this volume. But if the publishers are really anxious to give Lenin a square deal they should hand over the entire work to a competent and scholarly editor, knowing Russian and the historical and political background, for thorough revision. Less than that they cannot in justice do.

S. H.

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CONFERENCE ON PROBLEMS OF UNITY AND THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

I. INTRODUCTORY

ON February 14th, at the Battersea Town Hall, the LABOUR MONTHLY Conference took place on Problems of Unity and the People's Front. The opening speakers at the two sessions of the Conference, which was under the chairmanship of R. Palme Dutt, were Professor Harold J. Laski, Harry Adams, London Divisional Society of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers, and G. D. H. Cole. The total number of delegates appointed were 431, representing 246 organisations. The following table gives particulars according to the section of the Labour, democratic and peace movement represented.

	No. of organisations.	No. of delegates.
Trades Councils	17	29
Labour Party	16	29
Leagues of Youth and Student Labour bodies ..	11	23
Trade Unions (including 2 E.C.'s and 6 Area or District Committees)	89	157
Co-operatives	34	53
Socialist League, I.L.P. and Communist Party ..	52	101
Peace Councils	2	5
Left Book Clubs	11	12
Other organisations	14	22
	246	431

Some twenty-two speakers from all sections of the movement took part in the discussion.

II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION*

The Chairman, **R. Palme Dutt,** in opening the Conference read messages of support from organisations which had not been able to send delegates, including the Durham Miners' Association, Chopwell Lodge; Cowes and District Trades Council, Ammanford Trades Council and Labour Party, Torquay Divisional Labour Party, and Dover Trades Council.

In the course of his opening address the Chairman said: This is the sixth conference organised by the LABOUR MONTHLY. We began these conferences in 1931 with the coming of the world economic crisis, feeling that we were entering into a period of extreme urgency in which a new awakening and facing of problems and realising of unity had to take place. Our first conference then was called in 1931 on the problems of the economic crisis. We called the second one in 1932 on the war crisis as it was then developing in its first stages in the Far East. In 1935 we carried the process a stage further and tried the experiment of a delegate conference for a discussion of the problems of realising the united front against Fascism and War. In that first conference for the united front we had 257 delegates and 150 organisations. In

*The opening speeches by Professor Laski, Harry Adams and G. D. H. Cole, will be found printed previously on pages 141-157 of this number.

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the early summer of 1935 we had a second conference on the problems of the united front and to this conference came 311 delegates from 172 organisations. In the late summer of 1935 we organised a trade union conference on the problems of the Trade Unions and unity, and to this conference came 365 delegates from 181 organisations. And now this conference on the problems of unity and the People's Front in the present still more sharply developed stage has brought together over 400 delegates from a wide range of organisations.

This response shows that the modest rôle we are attempting to fulfil at these conferences, not in competition with any organisation of the Labour movement, but only to assist all the organisations of the Labour movement to come together with a clear common understanding and common policy in the present urgent crisis, is felt to be of use. We are met here because we recognise the urgency of the present crisis ; because there is a volume of feeling in this country in all the labour organisations, in all the democratic forces, that something has got to be done ; that a stand has got to be made ; that these organisations are failing to fulfil their duty ; that the leadership is failing to fulfil its duty, and we ordinary members of these organisations have got to find a way to realise our will if we are not going to go under.

That is the keynote as I understand it of our conference.

In the remainder of his remarks the Chairman outlined briefly the questions of working-class unity and the People's Front which the conference would have to consider.

L. Little (*Ch.*, 1/341, *South Norwood T. and G.W.U.*) said he disagreed with Brother Adams when he talked of class consciousness and the trade union movement or indeed of political consciousness, claiming that he would be very pleased if he could obtain in his trade union branch merely industrial consciousness, but he could not do that. He was in favour of the attempt to get unity in the Labour Movement, but he saw the difficulties owing to the really opposite philosophies we hold.

G. H. Loman (*Kingston Constituency Labour Party*) after instancing various expressions of Labour Party leaders as indicating why he had become very dissatisfied with Labour Party leadership, described how in Kingston, which he said was a very bourgeois area, he was a Labour candidate in 1934. During the election they had a very united platform, more than half the speakers being Communists and his party knew it, and the Labour vote increased. We have continued the United Front with success ; for instance, in spite of increasing our membership fees we doubled our membership in 1936, and it is greater than ever before. This is a direct tribute to the unity policy.

Alex Gossip (*General Secretary, Furnishing Trades Association*), after saying that while he had been challenged by the Labour Party Executive on more than one occasion, he had always been a strong supporter of the United Front. On the other hand he was or had not been clear until Cole spoke whether he could consider himself a supporter of the People's Front. But Cole had cleared away a number of misapprehensions such as that the advocates of the People's Front wanted some sort of an alliance between the Liberal Party and the Labour Party.

We have to be very careful with whom we associate with ; but if such unity is based on the mass struggle, then I am beginning to see the light in a way I did not see it before.

Coun. H. Solomons (*Wholesale Textile Branch, Shop Assistants*) began by saying he desired to utter a word of warning, to the effect that there was going to be a revival of heresy-hunting after the L.C.C. Elections on March 4th. Noticing that there were many delegates wearing trade union, Labour Party and League of Youth badges, he asked them particularly to stand firm even if you are not yourself attacked in order to support in every possible direction those friends of yours who are attacked. He claimed that if Citrine could appear in the Albert Hall in the company of people with whom he did appear, then those of us in the Labour Party are within our right to appear with those who are present to-day. He said he wanted to disassociate himself from Comrade Little's speech : he considered there was an urge in the minds of trade union members to do something active. If North Block of Transport House wants to stop us, then we must sweep North Block away. Everybody present at this Conference should go back to his or her Labour Party or trade union branch and work for unity. A few years ago I did not like the Communists and two years ago I was not in favour of the Popular Front. Now I find myself in favour of both. Our watchword has got to be unity. Those words written by John Lilburn in 1649 up there† are as true as they were then.

†Coun. Solomons is here referring to the words on the banner behind the platform which ran as follows : "The settling of the liberties and freedom of the people can never be permanently done but on the sure foundation of a popular agreement."

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G. D. W. Sines (1/425 *Branch T. and G.W.U.*) said he was still uncertain what the Popular Front meant. He considered that though the French Popular Front resulted in mass action and struggle, nevertheless it was primarily formed on an electoral basis. But he considered the situation in England was different where the Labour Party was the only alternative to the National Government. After referring to Cole's contention that one of the primary things that was needed from a Popular Front was a clear declaration on the international situation, which the Labour Party had not made, he claimed that on Abyssinia we had all the parties that might be expected to make up a Popular Front declaring themselves in different ways. From all this, he said, people might get the impression that he was against all forms of unity, but he contended that within the Labour Party, the trade unions and co-operatives, unity would be formed much better ; and by getting into the Labour Party then you would have a good Labour Party.

J. R. Shanley said he agreed with Cole when he said that if we solve the problems of the united front the problems of the people's front will to a considerable extent solve themselves. Therefore, we should see that in the trade union movement, the most powerful organisation to accomplish unity, work for the united front was done correctly. It is no use just passing resolutions in your trade union branch unless you get the members educated in support of your demands ; for otherwise Transport House can just ignore them. Left wingers in one branch should get into touch with other branches in each locality. After getting the Trades Council in support of your campaign see that the branches are also active. Let us make no mistake about it that the higher ranks of the trade union movement think that Fascism cannot come. We must liven up our trade union branch and on the top of that send in our resolutions and then Transport House will have to listen.

C. L. Hauser (*Hendon and Finchley Left Book Club*) claimed that the People's front consisted in mobilising all those elements potentially against the National Government into one strong bloc to bring it down. He said he was a member of the middle class, but I have reached that stage of political consciousness when I have recognised that if I wish to avoid war and fascism and improve the standard of the life of the people around me I must be inside the movement struggling against the National Government.

He described how he was surprised to find that the Hendon Left Book Club was composed not of workers but of a lot of respectable middle-class people, many of whom had never taken an active interest in politics ; they had not only proceeded to discuss books, but decided to organise a meeting on Spain and, having formed a committee composed of every progressive organisation in the district, they held the most successful meeting that Hendon had had for years.

G. Hunter (*Dartford Men's Co-operative Guild*) described how they had got unity in Dartford over Spain, in spite of the fact that Dartford, he said, was a very difficult place to organise. He was very much in favour of united activity, but he could not agree to the Popular Front at all. If we keep saying we are against war and fascism we will find ourselves supporting the existing Government. I would rather stand for a united front for socialism than one against war and fascism.

Miss Olive Beamish (*Vice-President, Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries*) then gave a detailed report on Spain on behalf of the Trade Union Delegation which had recently returned. She described how they had met the leaders of the different sections in the Government ; they all had made the following points. First, that this is not merely a Spanish, but an international, question ; it is the struggle of fascism against liberty and democracy throughout the world. Secondly, there was great unity between all the parties in Spain, no matter what their aims, to defeat fascism. Thirdly, that the Spanish people are whole-heartedly behind the Government.

After giving a vivid description of all that they saw in Madrid and elsewhere and the wonderful reception they received from the International Brigade, she urged that every one, as well as passing this resolution‡ should bring pressure in every direction—there are many decent-minded non-political people who can be roused to take action—to make this Government retreat. It is our responsibility here in Britain, for the French Government are afraid to take action unless they feel that Great Britain is behind them.

J. Franco (*Hackney I.L.P.*) opposed the policy of the Popular Front on the grounds that the British colonial people will be brought here to fight against the Popular Front just as the Moors were in Spain. We must offer a united front of the working class on points where they do agree.

‡An emergency resolution on Spain which was unanimously passed, the text of which will be found at the conclusion of this section. Any organisation wishing to invite a member of this Delegation to speak should write to W. J. Jones, 3 Hale End Rd., E.17. (Tel. Larkswood 1576.)

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J. Bronson (*North London N.U.C.*), in putting forward a minority point of view from his branch, also opposed the People's Front, criticising the operation of the People's Front in France and Spain.

A. A. MacGregor (Socialist League) speaking as an individual member of the Labour Party and a Labour parliamentary candidate, said that the Edinburgh Conference had been the cause of disunity. At that Conference the most vital issue was that of foreign policy, but not one of the leaders gave the same interpretation of their resolution ; yet Bevin said we will have to be bound by Party decisions. The fault lies at the top and my job is to fight inside the Party as long as I can, and if they throw me out then I will fight from outside. Referring to the discussion that, he said, was now going on at Transport House on individual membership, disciplinary action will probably be taken. I do not know what the outcome will be, but if they try to throw out members like myself it will be the greatest psychological blunder they have ever committed. I do not quite agree, he said, with the Communists, and I am sure they do not agree with me, but I have a profound sympathy with them. Remember that power rests still in your own hands. Against the united workers no power in the world can stand either physically or not.

G. J. Llewellyn (*Secretary, High Wycombe Branch, A.S.W.*) said he was proud to be at the Conference to-day. He felt that the trade union is the only thing that will bring the United Front in this country. We have got to get every one in employment in a trade union. By getting this you will have your United Front immediately. You have your Popular Front by working locally for Spanish meetings such as with our local Spanish Democracy Defence Committee due to the efforts of the local Labour Party and trade unions. As regards the A.S.W. disaffiliating from the Building Trades Federation referred to by Harry Adams, his branch had resolved against it, as they considered that disaffiliation would be a great setback to the United Front.

Ted Bramley (*London District, Communist Party*) gave reasons why there were a considerable number in the movement opposed to the United Front and the People's Front ; some people say : however good Communists might be to associate with in the factory or on the door step, it would lose the middle-class vote. Then others consider it is impossible for people whose ultimate aims are different to be united on a common campaign. Thirdly, while the People's Front and unity may well have been the salvation in France, it is impossible here, they say, as it is merely an electoral arrangement.

Several elections, however, based on unity have already shown remarkable results, e.g., at Oxford. Or take the Earls Court building job position. Did they ask anyone what was his ultimate aim before they asked him to join in the strike ? Then take the question of colonies ; if you try to make their complete independence a point in the programme you wont get certain sections of the middle strata, but surely you will get them to agree to fight for the same rights of free speech for the Indians as exist here. The people's front in France was far from being an electoral arrangement. It was born of struggle first of the working class, then of the middle class, and then of other sections against fascism. Take the East End demonstration against Mosley on October 4 last or the Hunger March, there was unity in action, or in the case of the South Wales Miners' Federation's drive against non-unionism. In the case of the L.C.C. elections, even if we do not agree with Morrison, we must work unceasingly for a Labour victory, as it is the only alternative to a return of the Tories.

What is wanted immediately is unity, first of all of the working class which will express itself here in the affiliation of the Communist Party, the I.L.P., and the Socialist League to the Labour Party, on the basis of accepting the decisions of its conferences. Out of this it will be possible to unite the whole of the Labour Movement on the basis of a fight against fascism and war, for a real Defence policy in co-operation with France and the Soviet Union, for a great social advance and recruitment to the trade unions, all of which will enable the working class to win overwhelming support from that great and important section of the population, the middle strata.

T. Edwards (*North Battersea Co-operative Political Council*) declared that the strongest advocates of unity were doing all they could towards disunity. The people's front was impracticable ; there was no way of bringing it about. We could come to some common agreement in the trade unions and all working-class organisations and if we impress upon them the need for unity, we could achieve it.

In his opinion, said **Comrade Green** (*Houndsditch and Whitechapel Shop Assistants*), it was only through working through the trade union movement that we could achieve unity. We must build up the workers' organisations before we can change the policy of the Labour Movement. We must work from the bottom up to the top.

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M. L. B. Spencer (*Cambridge University Socialist Society*) spoke of the unity they had achieved in the student movement on the grounds of the menace of fascism. A few years ago Mosley was making great strides in the universities, but to-day he dare not come near any of them. The students were coming together because they saw that science was being used for war and years of study were being ruined by the war menace. There was unemployment amongst students as well as amongst the workers. Referring to the accusation that the United Front was a manœuvre, he said: Comrade John Cornford worked for unity in Cambridge, worked for students' unity, and died for the unity of the Spanish people. If anyone called Comrade Cornford a manœuverer we would take him and put him in the river to-morrow. By our example of unity we hope to further the unity of the working class as a whole.

S. Alley (*Colonial Seamen's Association*) said he, as a representative of the Colonial peoples, was glad to greet the Conference, for the British working class was gradually coming to realise that they were not the masters of the Empire. They are like us and have the same thing to fight for. Whatever you do, unless you bring in the Colonials, you will go astray. Your problems are our problems and your enemy ours. Unless this unity is achieved the Popular Front will not be attained. It is because of the Empire that there are so many unemployed here. A strong unity movement would affect the colonial workers all over the world.

F. Barrett (*Catford Branch, Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers*) agreed that we all want unity, but considered that we must form the united front on the basis of understanding the nature of the capitalist system, how under it unemployment cannot be abolished and how capitalism must move to war, as a result of a conflict of economic interests.

E. Fairbrother (1/346 *N.W.Cab Branch, T. and G.W.U.*) declared that the reason why it was necessary for the working class to drop all labels, was the immediate danger of fascism. The capitalist class was democratic enough so long as you put them in power, but if a war breaks out or there is a danger of war do they have a plebiscite of the people when they are asking us to give up our lives? It is up to you to discover how to encourage the bulk of people who work in the trade unions to make them centres of mass struggle.

J. Deakin (*South Battersea Labour League of Youth*) spoke about the rapid rise of the Communist Party and how in Battersea, where there was unity, it had been accompanied by an increase in the Labour Party. He said that Comrade Synes, in declaring that the Labour Party was the only alternative to the Conservative Party, had forgotten what had happened in Germany.

T. Harrison (*Twickenham Co-operative Political Council*) spoke about what the Co-operative Movement could do in the Popular Front. We can lead the fight against profiteering, help the workers in industrial disputes, the Hunger Marchers and Spain. The Co-operative Movement is the only working-class organisation which has penetrated into agricultural areas where no other working-class organisation has been able to reach to, just as it is the only workers' body which is in contact with the farmers through the purchase of dairy produce, etc. As regards the Women's Guilds, here we have the cream of working-class women; as Lenin and others have said, nothing can be done unless we carry the women of the movement with us; they are to be found in the Guilds. He appealed to all co-operators, in spite of their irritation with the results of Edinburgh, to realise that there is no salvation for the Co-operative Movement except it be the salvation of the working class as a whole. He appealed to all co-operators to act as many of them acted at the last elections: to get all the members to work for Labour at the coming L.C.C. Elections.

In his closing remarks the Chairman dealt mainly with questions of the people's front and various issues raised in the discussion. He appealed to delegates to support the LABOUR MONTHLY as an organ fighting for the unity of all labour organisations; and he appealed to all delegates to be active in their organisations to win support for the Unity Campaign.

III. EMERGENCY RESOLUTION ON SPAIN

This Conference wholeheartedly greets the heroic struggle of the Spanish people united behind the Caballero government, fighting for democracy and national independence against foreign fascist invasion and home fascist rebellion. Because the people of Spain are fighting for the future of peace and democracy throughout Europe, it is the duty of the Western democracies,

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above all of Britain, to give them immediate aid. Without the support of the National Government, cloaked by phrases of non-intervention, the fascist advance could not continue.

The Conference calls upon all working-class, democratic and peace organisations, ceaselessly to press the National Council of Labour immediately to convene a national conference and to develop throughout the country a vigorous campaign, rousing the people to compel the National Government to raise the ban on arms for the Spanish Government and to send aid to the Spanish people.

The Conference calls upon the National Council of Labour to further without delay the call of the Spanish General Federation of Labour for a united international conference to organise help for the Spanish people.

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The Financial Appeal

THIS last month has proved a record in this appeal for funds for the LABOUR MONTHLY from several points of view. It will be seen that some £45 in all has been collected.

Of this sum, £13 has been specially collected to enable this number to be increased by eight pages in order that the very successful LABOUR MONTHLY Conference on Problems of Unity and the People's Front could be reported adequately, at the same time not unduly restricting the space ordinarily given to articles and book reviews. Although £13 is not quite sufficient to cover this extra eight pages as well as meeting the deficit on the Conference expenses, remaining after the splendid collection of £15 that was there made, it was thought that the opening speeches and discussion at the Conference were of such importance as to warrant the LABOUR MONTHLY taking this risk, relying on the goodwill of readers to support what deficit still remains. We rely on readers to respond with all they can to clear this commitment.

This month's collection constitutes a record also for the reason that the recent appeal to new readers has brought not only response from a number who have not yet supported the MONTHLY before, but also from a reader who only recently began reading the MONTHLY and has responded not only very generously with the splendid donation of £20, but also has been taking a number to sell amongst friends.

New readers, we hope, will follow this example, for as we said here before, the MONTHLY's future will be assured both by the monthly guarantee to meet the present deficit but also still more permanently by that increase in circulation necessary to reach the point when the deficit, and the necessity for an appeal to meet it, will be altogether eliminated.

Once again we feel sure that the nature of the contents this month as well as the writers should appeal to a wide circle of people who have not yet come to regard the MONTHLY as part of their regular current literature.

Therefore we appeal to new readers, especially, not only to do what you can to wipe out the accumulated debt, now brought down to £200, or make a monthly guarantee, but also to take a number of extra copies to sell in your organisation or amongst your friends.

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En Passant . . .

May we remind you that the Leicester Co-operative Printing Society, equipped with four spacious factories, up-to-the-minute machinery and skilled craftsmen, is always at your service. For a considerable number of years this firm has been the "pantheon" of everything appertaining to the art of Printing, and now, combined with departments for Box-making and Stationery, is capable of undertaking work of every description. No order is too small or too large but that it will receive our utmost attention—and at the right price.

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